

A COLLABORATIVE MODEL FOR ESTABLISHING A
TRANSITIONAL HOUSING MINISTRY FOR
EX-OFFENDERS

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ABSTRACT

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by

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This project is a faith-based, collaborative approach that was developed and implemented with Antioch Builds Community and faith institutions in Durham, North Carolina. This project will address housing needs of ex-offenders as they are re-integrated into the community. This project was deemed successful as Antioch Builds Community, Emmaus Way Fellowship, and Chapel Hill Bible Church opened their first transitional home in April 2010. This effort was successful with the participation of “storefront churches” that are found in low-income communities. The strategy that will be used will be questionnaires, focus groups, and interviews to determine interventions needed in accessing housing alternatives.

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DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate the writing and implementation of this project to the Antioch Builds Community board of directors, Antioch Baptist Church family, and the Durham faith community, all of which supported me in facilitating this project. Antioch, thank you for your encouragement, patience and support, as I required considerable time to write this document. I am extremely grateful for your tireless efforts to assist in implementing my dream of establishing a transitional facility for returning citizens.

To my buddies who pushed me forward when I felt like giving up: I appreciate you and your persistence. I recall the notes of congratulations, calls to keep pressing forward, and reminders to keep my eye on the prize.

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Finally, I could not have completed this project without the love, nurturing and caring attitude of my life-long friend and wife, Deborah. Thank you for helping me to achieve a major milestone in my life. You have always been there for me.

May God Bless You All.

Michael

INTRODUCTION

One of the primary challenges faced by *returning citizens*—defined in this project as ex-offenders who have returned to the community from the criminal justice system—is the need to find appropriate resources to assist them in gaining their independence and freedom back in society. The main challenge that most offenders face is being able to secure adequate housing in a safe and orderly environment.

The belief is that the entire community including government, social services, corporate, and the faith-based communities must reach out to find solutions for adequate housing needs. The housing solution for returning citizens is a crisis in the communities, and to reduce recidivism the faith community must look collaboratively at addressing this issue for these citizens.

The purpose of this project is to implement a collaborative model among the faith community that will respond to the crisis and provide opportunities for housing. The hypothesis is that when a host of churches work together and share resources that we can begin to address this concern and eliminate the problem that currently exist. The church is uniquely able to create a model that will reduce the number of returning citizens who become homeless, transient and unable to live in decent and affordable housing.

The context of this ministry project is Antioch Builds Community, a non-profit affiliate of Antioch Baptist Church that is located in the highest crime area of Durham, North Carolina. Through constant contact with individuals, we have found that a high number of returning citizens exist in this community due to substandard housing, poor economic conditions and are limited with areas of the community that they can live in.

It is the researcher's hope that by developing this model, it will allow the churches to fulfill one of the mission opportunities about which Jesus spoke in Matt. 9:35-36. This model should provide a collaborative approach to engage several congregations to create a partnership and provide a welcoming environment for the returning citizens. As a result of this collaboration, the returning citizens will view the church as a place of refuge that is eager to assist them in gaining independence.

Chapter One of this project will explore the researcher's spiritual journey and how he has come to support and become passionate about this need for persons leaving the criminal justice system. The reader will gain an understanding of how our journey is to become an asset to helping others overcome barriers. The context of the project is shared and the understanding of the need for collaboration.

Chapter Two will share the state of the art of this ministry research model. The writer will share the reasons for implementing the project and how this model can promote positive collaboration among the faith community.

Chapter Three explores the theoretical foundation relating to the faith community and its involvement in prisons.

The researcher will use as a biblical perspective Isa. 61:1 from the Old Testament and Matt. 25:35-36 and challenge the reader to understand the faith community role in supporting those who are considered challenged because of mistakes that were made and having to live with them.

Chapter Five gives an overview of the results compiled with onsite interviews, pre- and post-testing, and listening to returning citizens who shared first-hand accounts of their incarceration.

Chapter Six includes a summation, reflection and conclusion of this project. This information will be based on research shared, observations and models to assist returning citizens to gain self-sufficiency, independence and improve the quality of life. It will highlight the researcher's implementation of the project and some of the obstacles, achievements and strategies to assist in improving the collaboration of this ministry project.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

The ministry focus of this project is to respond to the housing crisis that confronts returning citizens as they exit the criminal justice system. This project will address how the faith community, with its many resources and compassionate care, can collaborate to assist these individuals. Because of their criminal records, many ex-offenders experience difficulty obtaining employment and therefore housing. The researcher believes that the faith community can create collaborative efforts to address this growing problem, thus helping to reduce recidivism in the community. Recidivism occurs when a former prisoner re-enters the criminal justice system because of new infractions.

The researcher is pastor of Antioch Baptist Church in Durham, North Carolina; director of Campus Ministry at North Carolina Central University; and chairman of the Durham County Board of Commissioners. The researcher also served as chairman of the board of directors for Antioch Builds Community, a nonprofit affiliate of the church community. The community where the researcher serves as pastor is heavily populated with returning citizens, and a majority face the challenge of gaining employment, housing, and other supportive services. It is not expected that these individuals will be seen in church pews on Sunday morning or Wednesday night. However, it is the researcher's belief that the community must join them in their struggle to find adequate housing.

This project is a collaborative effort with some of the returning citizens who agreed to share their stories with religious and community leaders, officials from the criminal justice system, and local churches. Antioch Builds Community has committed itself to addressing and responding to this issue and has taken the leadership in purchasing its first home for returning citizens.

The researcher identified and met with community leaders and members of the faith community who shared similar interests in creating partnerships to address these concerns. The researcher believed that it was important to have an initial conversation with leaders of the various congregations and expected to work closely with the laity in executing the project.

The researcher—Michael Delano Page—was born in the small, rural town of Charlottesville, in central Virginia. He was born the fourth child of Tom and Sarah Epps Page on December 22, 1959. It was over the years through love and nurturing that he developed into a young man full of promise and dreams. His home was centered on a family focus of raising five children, and his parents worked hard daily to provide for their basic needs. The family was considered economically to be in the upper-lower income class, but the researcher does not recall his family ever wanting for basic needs.

In this rural setting, there were few extracurricular activities for young people. During the summer months, the children remained at home when school was out. However, the researcher was fortunate to have been involved in 4-H and his church's Vacation Bible School. His experience with 4-H gave him unique opportunities in leadership development. He served in numerous leadership capacities, including as chief officer.

One of his greatest experiences in 4-H involved an opportunity to enhance his skills in public speaking. He believes firmly in the scripture found in the book of Jeremiah that states, "I know the plans I have for you, for you to prosper," because 4-H provided the foundation for his calling to ministry. It was through 4-H that he learned to stand correctly, articulate clearly, and formulate his writing into speeches. It also helped him overcome a serious fear of public speaking. It was through 4-H, the researcher is convinced, that God gave him the first step in achieving His plans for the researcher. As a member of that esteemed organization, he advocated for a litter-free community, and he organized several cleanup days through which the community came together to promote a healthy environment.

This organization was also instrumental in teaching him good decision-making, skill development, self-esteem, and how to turn a negative situation into something positive. He had the utmost respect for his leaders and advisors as they helped shape the researcher into a productive citizen. His aunt, Cecilia Epps, a volunteer, frequently provided transportation and a site for his club to meet, and she was devoted to humankind as she encouraged the researcher to be a model club member.

The other leader who had a major impact on the researcher's life was a home demonstration agent named Carolyn Albritton. This professional woman came to the researcher's small town and spent her entire career working for the children and families of Nelson County. She was highly competent and articulate, and she devoted her life to giving many of the underprivileged children in the researcher's county an opportunity to excel. During those days in the early 1960s, African-American women were often limited professionally to being housewives, teachers, and maids. Albritton, in her nontraditional

role, was well respected by the members of the community, and she often gave of her time to help nurture and build relationships with the governmental and grassroots community. The researcher recalls her and his mother becoming strong in their relationship and teaming up to make a difference in the community.

The researcher's parents received their formal educations in public schools but did not continue beyond high school. His father, a veteran of the United States Army, was a foreman in a chemical plant, while his mother worked in manufacturing and eventually became a dental assistant. She loved the latter position, as it allowed her to interact with the community in encouraging good dental hygiene. The researcher's parents were community driven; they believed in being involved in social, civic, and political organizations. The climate of his community was such that many African-Americans were not involved in community affairs due to a lack of education, socio-economic status, and the overall unwelcoming atmosphere in most organizations. However, he believed that he had a wonderful family that was headed in a positive direction, and that his siblings and he had been groomed to follow their dreams.

When he looks back over their years together, he remember the family time, the annual vacation, and the shopping trips where they could not afford to eat in restaurants, so they purchased food from the nearest store and ate sandwiches in the car. He valued the opportunity to pick up a Bible and attempt to make sense of a story that was not relevant to him. He valued the old-fashioned prayer service, where the only time they talked was during the portion set aside for testimonies. He knew from a young age that he loved the Lord and would eagerly wait to see where He would lead the researcher in life. He had no idea he could have influence on others, but his local pastor was a blessing to

him. His quiet and sincere demeanor and ability to speak life into any dead situation gave the researcher excitement about not ever missing church.

The researcher's pastor, Eugene David Irvine, was a humble and compassionate man who epitomized the life of ministry. He was an educated pastor who always gave substance to his messages. The researcher reiterates that it was not common for African-Americans to have education beyond high school. Therefore, he was fortunate to have a pastor who could pastor and lead a flock. The researcher considers him to be another major influence in his life, and he was a person who the researcher desired to emulate.

It did not help that people would often tell the that one day he was going to be a preacher, if he just kept doing the right thing. He sensed a calling on his life at an early age but knew that he was too young to be serious about ministry. His desire was to get out and experience the world and not be confined to one area. His goals were to ultimately experience bright lights, cars racing by, supermarkets, shopping centers, nightclubs, etc. He wanted to see what a mega-church looked like, what it was like to stay up all night and just do the things that a young adult would do. It was his decision that accepting God's calling would have to wait.

In the twinkling of an eye, the researcher's existence as a close-knit family ended. It was shattered and came to an abrupt end right before his eyes. A car accident took the life of his mother—his most trusted advisor, encourager, and friend—on the morning of December 27, 1970. The family was on their annual holiday vacation when the horrible accident occurred. The morning was as cold as it was hurtful, and he watched in horror as his mother helplessly struggled with a tire blowout, lost control of the car in which they were riding, swerved, hit a bridge and flipped over sideways. It was the ending of a four-

day trip during which the family had shared with extended family fellowship, food, gifts, and fun.

No one in the world could have ever told the researcher that this Christmas vacation would end this way. It was tragedy, to say the least—a family tragedy, a community tragedy, and a loss for generations to come. His mother was driving a brand-new Chevrolet Impala, and a bad tire caused the loss of a lifetime. This was his mother's time to answer God, and they had no time to say goodbye.

The community was stunned, his family was devastated, and he wondered where the love of God was in the midst of this family crisis. He was lost, and he felt that he honestly had nowhere to turn. He had been stripped of one of the most prized possession in my life—his mother. He was torn up by this loss and did not really care about anything else. He now had to adapt to a serious change where the mean lady who disciplined him repeatedly would be removed from his life. He had to understand why the pleasantly dressed Christian woman who gave of her heart and soul to anyone who needed it was taken away. Perhaps this was a dream he simply needed to wake up from, or perhaps he was seeing and not believing. He prayed as he never prayed before: “Lord, please let my mother be alright; Lord, I do not want another mother, please let my mother be alright.”

The emergency personnel came and removed the researcher and his family from the wreckage. They put his father, brothers, and him in one unit and placed his mother in a unit alone. They were enroute to the hospital to be treated for cuts and lacerations but stopped after twenty minutes. The paramedics got out of the vehicles and conferred with one another. The researcher's ten-year-old mind told him it is over; it is all over. He knew

it, and nobody had to tell him. His mother had slipped away and quietly gone home to be with the Lord.

What was next, he wondered? After numerous people coming to our house, a funeral that was held in a blinding snow, and a burial during which he was unable to control himself, the researcher had to pick up and move forward. Many questions surrounded him, such as whether his father would raise them from that point, would the siblings be separated, and what in the heck would they do as the person who held it all together was not coming back home. Needless to say, this was the most painful time in the researcher's life. He was afraid that they would be separated as a family. His father did an amazing job of keeping them together as and raising each of them in such a way that they were able to attend college. The researcher was the only child in my family who completed post-secondary education, however.

It was difficult for him to leave home. The experience of being in Upward Bound allowed him to spend summers away, which was good preparation for being away at college. After he enrolled at St. Augustine's College, however, he despised being there. He did not want to stay, and he was determined to get into another school. The researcher was not motivated to learn. He knew that his journey must continue, so he applied and was accepted at North Carolina Central University. He felt challenged, excited, and was enthusiastic about that institution. He completed his studies for an undergraduate degree in public administration. He knew then that life would start to turn in his favor. He was spiritually connected but not totally committed. He thought that it was a time for him to experience life.

The researcher continued to hear from God about his future. God clearly spoke to the researcher about his servanthood and loyalty to Him, but all the researcher wanted then was a casual relationship. The researcher was now considered a young professional, and he thought it was time for him to paint the city. This was not the plan God had for him, but he struggled with obedience. He tried to bargain with God that he might enjoy the best of both worlds. It was after several years of trying to live in the best of both worlds that it became clear that he had no bargaining power. He reached a point where he had to change some things, including his way of living. He realized after almost losing his life that he was not the servant God was shaping him to be. Either he would accept this wake-up call or he would be headed for destruction.

Talk about warnings: The researcher had received them on a regular basis. His dream was to become a prominent businessman or to run his own personnel agency. This was his dream, but it was not God's plan. The researcher knew that he had to respond to His calling sooner or later. He was afraid and just not ready. He continued to search his heart and decided that he was 100 percent ready to give his life to Christ.

The researcher was an avid church worshipper, was active in many ministries, was an organizational leader, and a prayer warrior, but he was not ready. God encouraged him to begin this process by reading II Timothy 2:15, where it states: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly divining the word of truth." This convinced the researcher that it was time to become enrolled. Perhaps after three years of study, he would be ready to accept God's calling on his life, so he felt this was okay. He was accepted at Shaw Divinity School and believed that this was the right direction. He was motivated for ministry and was finally beginning to feel

that he was closer to accepting his call and that God was opening up doors that he could never imagine.

Unfortunately, in the church where he had spent the past twenty years, the congregation was going through administration changes, and it was a difficult adjustment for the church family. Never in his life had the researcher seen a church in such an uproar, and this tore him up inside. He prayed day in and day out that the Lord would hear his cry. His faith became weak and he wanted to escape from the escapade with God's chosen leader and His people. This was what the researcher considered a traumatic experience, and he did not believe what was happening before his eyes. To say the least, he was discouraged with church and church people. His journey was going to be redirected. God showed him how he could be a positive force in the midst of this confusion. The church had about 900 people, many of them strong in their attendance, but after careful observation the researcher could see that they were not what God had called the church to be. He questioned the congregation's direction to serve and to understand their role as disciples. He became the church administrator, but he spent considerable time serving as a liaison between pastor and people. This position offered him the training and expertise he needed to learn the office of church administrator.

When the researcher accepted his calling to preach the gospel in March of 1996, he felt so much closer to God because of the work he had done and enjoyed so much. He was blessed to have the experience that he had received. It was during the two years of serving in the capacity of church administrator, working closely with the senior pastor, developing relationships with the various ministries, and effectively serving the church in different functions, that the researcher gained an understanding of the beliefs and

thoughts of trustees and deacons in relation to understanding the contextual development of ministry. This relationship was forced to end due to a difference of opinions among leadership and the researcher.

God blessed the researcher with a charming wife whom he had met at his previous church. His wife-to-be was with him as he traveled looking for a church home. They were supposed to have been married in that church six months after his departure, but because of the hurt and pain they both endured, they moved their wedding to an alternate location. His wife had been his saving grace, as she encouraged him in ministry at a time when he was vulnerable. Deborah was supportive of his ministerial engagements, often traveling with him and always providing solid advice. She is a strong, Christian woman who the researcher knew had been sent by God at the right time in his life. He had apprehensions about being married, but he knew the time was right. They enjoyed worshipping together and sharing the love of Jesus Christ. They were open and honest with each other, even when it hurt to tell the stories of their lives. They confided in each other, and the researcher believed that they had an open and trusting relationship. They learned a great deal from each other, and there remains a world of opportunities that they can still share. The researcher's respect for his wife has given him the maturity and growth he needed in being a Christian gentleman. He respects her career, and she is equally involved in the ministries of the church.

God gave him the dream he always wanted, but he was afraid to step up to the plate. He knew that he had a calling on his life, and he knew from decades ago that God would use him in His kingdom. The problem was with the researcher. He did not want to be anybody's pastor until he was ready, or better yet, until he said so. The researcher

would never have answered this call until God gave him the wake up call. He now believes that through all of his experiences, the Lord was molding and shaping him for a bright and promising future. He had run out of steam on secular life and found joy in serving God. The unique experience of being called to serve as pastor of his current church, Antioch Baptist, was a breakthrough. He believed that God was delivering to him the promises He has shared, but the researcher had to be ready and fit for service. He was equipped with a solid training and with direction to lead God's people, which would be an awesome task. He had to remind himself that caring for this flock could be time consuming, frustrating, and sometimes difficult, but the other side to this was that caring for God's sheep could be rewarding, positive, and a learning experience.

Then, as the Lord led the researcher to lead in a traditional faith setting, he was equally excited to become a leader in a church. This was an ultimate dream. However, he was not willing to accept the call to get there. He knew that his life was destined for the pulpit, but it was a matter of life changing dramatically, as he would now be required to prepare a weekly sermon, maintain a consistent prayer life, and study the Word of God faithfully. He was required to adjust to this persistent style of living, as it would allow him to be effective in ministry. He had no fear that God would give him vision to minister to this church body. He was confident that God's plan would be evident for what God wanted him to do.

The researcher became concerned that he was given the opportunity to work on transforming a community. His fear was that the community was too large and plagued with all types of social ills. He could not understand how this church could help move people from poverty to a reasonable economic status. He felt as though this church God

had given him was right in the middle of a drug center that was challenged with prostitutes, panhandlers, and perpetrators of crime.

Was this a gift from God? The researcher remembered clearly that he could do all things through Christ who gave him strength. He knew that if the Lord brought him to it, He would bring him through any situation. His faith became strong that this was an assignment from on high and that he must allow God the opportunity to work in him for His glory to be revealed. One should marvel at an opportunity to lead a flock and work at changing a community, he reasoned to himself.

The researcher is eternally grateful to God for shaping his life to lead this ministry. Finally, he is seeing some continuity in his life and the ability to help others believe in themselves. He is encouraged when he sees underprivileged children find a beacon of hope in the community where the church was located. It is real for him that he is now doing what he has seen others do, and he is no longer fearful of the assignment.

The researcher now is pursuing another life-long dream—to earn a Doctorate in Ministry. It came to him very clearly that the time was right for to make this step. There was no reason for him not to apply, and he wanted to apply all my ministerial experience to achieving this goal. He is confident that this is a right move, and he looks forward to completing this assignment and moving in the next direction that God will lead him.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STATE OF THE ART IN THIS MINISTRY PROJECT

I am still enchained, handcuffed, and under armed guard. I
won't be fully free until I am returned to the hometown I once left,
a place that now represents my liberation.

Evans D. Hopkins, *Life after Life*

The researcher believes that if communities are to address the issues of returning citizens that it will take a collaborative effort from the faith community. Re-entry is the process of reintegrating offenders back into the community. The faith community is an essential component to solving the issues that confront the many people who walked the streets on which their churches are located. This chapter will explore the state of the art of re-entry efforts in providing collaborative efforts among the various congregations and faith organizations in the community.

Additionally, this chapter will explore the role of faith institutions in collaborating to provide additional resources for returning citizens, advocacy for a change in the treatment of these individuals, and how these organizations can identify ways to open additional doors for re-entry participants. The author will then look at opportunities for collaboration among the various faith communities to reduce recidivism and support re-entry in communities. The author also will use Antioch Builds Community as a model program to support re-entry initiatives in the North East Central Durham, North Carolina, community.

Howard Thurman in his writing *Meditations of the Heart* said that “the struggle for bread and shelter continues to the very end to the beat at our lives and our very spirits with an insistence that cannot be ignored.”¹ With this exhortation, the church must begin to realize that outside the walls of the church there is a constant struggle among the “least of the these” to acquire bread and shelter, and the church cannot overlook the necessity to help those in need. It is obvious that governmental, corporate, and other entities have overlook this community need and that the faith community is one of the few options capable of helping ex-offenders survive. While no one church can succeed alone, through partnership the various faith organizations can, indeed, adequately address the issues that confront this struggling population.

Millicent Hunter contends that “the presence of sin in the earth is the source of every problem that confronts us.”² All deal with sin in our world. However, it is left up to Christians to work to correct the sin and help people overcome the barriers that led to sin. Some recognize the sin as a community problem that lead to behaviors that are unacceptable and unsafe. This leads to a third signpost: Namely, that the calling upon the community of faith is to servanthood.

Servanthood must lead to the collaboration of the various ministries to address the problems faced by ex-offenders. Because many of the correctional departments are struggling with tight economic conditions and budgets, many of them realize that they can improve public service by forming partnerships with community and faith-based groups to assist them in helping offenders make a safe and successful return to the

¹ Howard Thurman, *Meditations of the Heart* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1981), 45.

² Millicent Hunter, *Destined to Win* (Philadelphia: Hunter Publishers, 2009), 67.

community. Forming these partnerships will give the faith community an opportunity to demonstrate servanthood among its disciples. Government will not be able to provide the level of services that these individuals need to survive. Such efforts are best delivered through a community of supportive relationships. While many of these churches struggle with the prison and the pew, it must be the churches' faithful service to address the needs of this population.

As Dietrich Bonhoeffer said: "He who would learn to serve must first learn to think little of himself."³ This belief of Bonhoeffer should help the faith community collectively as servants to recognize little of itself to be able to serve those in its presence. "His second service that one should perform for another in a Christian community is that of active helpfulness."⁴ If the church is to provide the compassion and passion to serve this population, it must act as committed servants to engaging in a spirit of helpfulness. "It must begin to think of mission as the posture of persons seeking to perpetually participate in God's work."⁵ This aligns closely with the belief that creating partnerships with the faith community can help heal many of the situations that these individuals have experienced. They have experienced brokenness, forgiveness, and restoration, and these community partners can support their reintegration. The cost appears to be less likely for faith communities compared perhaps to what the governmental organizations would experience in continuing to support offenders. Lisa Hess believes that "stewardship therefore refers to service, but an important distinction arises here for spiritual

³ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together: A Discussion of Christian Fellowship* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1954), 94.

⁴ Ibid., 94.

⁵ Tim Conder, *The Church in Transition: The Journey of Existing Churches into the Emerging Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 2006.

stewardship.”⁶ “Spiritual stewardship describes services that sustains self and others.”⁷ If we utilize our stewardship responsibilities wisely then refocusing on the importance of faith based partnership to stress rehabilitation and helping those persons transition back to neighborhoods will subsequently make our communities safer and result in fewer victims.

Reasons for Collaboration

The Bureau of Prisons had to change its focus on reentry to address some of the underlying concerns that confronted offenders in gaining independence. The bureau believed that “offender reentry could be achieved more successfully if the following components are implemented:

- Identification of the core skills needed for successful offender reentry
- An objective assessment of those skills and continue measurement of the skills acquisition, rather than simple program completion
- Linkage of programs to specific reentry skills
- Allocation of resources to those inmates with the greatest skill deficiencies and hence, the greatest risk of recidivism; and
- Information sharing and the building of community collaborations for a holistic approach to transitioning offenders.”⁸

⁶ Lisa M. Hess, *Artisanal Theology: Intentional Formation in Radically Covenantal Companionship* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009), 27.

⁷ Ibid., 27.

⁸ Corrections Today magazine, “Re-Entry,” December 2009, 51.

These reasons are critical to preparing offenders for release and giving greater support to those who will be working closely with them. It is important that we prevent recidivism therefore these collaborative partnerships will respond more effectively to the needs of its clients. Faith communities can be effective in solving these issues through various trainings and understanding the journey of the individuals they work with. There must be compassion and passion to achieve results for successful reentry.

Role of the Faith Community

Helping those reclaim independence requires an understanding of the plight that many of these incarcerated individuals have been through in their lifetime. Ernest Johnson, in *Brothers on the Mend*, suggests that “for a man to live life using righteous principles, he must excel in four areas: 1.) Relationship with God, 2.) Ability to ignore inconsequential issues, 3.) Ability to forgive and forget past injustices, and 4.) Ability to live by loving everyone and everything, despite what was done against him.”⁹ If the faith community is to succeed in rehabilitating and reintegrating ex-offenders into the community, it must encourage them to embrace Johnson’s principles. They must let go of past injustices and focus on opportunities that will build positive and meaningful lives.

H. Beecher Hicks, Jr. concurs that “Stone walls do not a prison make nor iron bars a cage, you can lock me up, you can degrade me but as long as my soul is lifted up and my spirit is on high you can’t keep me caged.”¹⁰ The faith community can be

⁹ Ernest H. Johnson, *Brother on the Mend: Understanding and Healing Anger for African American Men and Women* (New York: Pocket Books, 1998), 243.

¹⁰ H. Beecher Hicks, Jr., *A Strange Path To Power* (Chicago: Urban Ministries, 1998), 13.

instrumental in helping the newly released encounter a freedom that will allow them to escape the past and feel encouraged that they will succeed in this new chapter of their lives. The role of the faith community is crucial in providing an environment that demands accountability in a loving, nurturing, sacrificial, and holistic setting. It is the ability of the faith community to work toward transformation and encouraging these returning citizens to be respectful and law-abiding citizens again.

According to the author Howard Thurman, “The religious experience is defined as a dynamic encounter between man and God through the experience of prayer and human suffering.”¹¹ This role is crucial as we look closer at human suffering and strive to alleviate the hurt that, in some cases, led to incarceration. The faith community philosophy centers its life on forgiveness and reconciliation and continuing to support forgiveness of sin. Mack King Carter believes that “the task for the church in the community is to present an unpopular Christ to an oppressed people as the way of salvation.”¹² The faith community role will be invaluable as they work to seek transformation of what may have been considered unfaithful people. There are critics who believe that transformation is not possible. However, many believed that there are options to help change behaviors and lead to total rehabilitation. There is considerable support from churches and other faith based organizations to support and be a leader in combating recidivism in our community. “Caring within a local black congregation is a

¹¹ Howard Thurman, *With Head and Heart: The Autobiography of Howard Thurman* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1979), 226.

¹² Mack King Carter, *A Quest for Freedom: An African American Odyssey* (Winter Park, FL: Four-G Publishers, Inc., 1993), 98.

response pattern to God's unfolding story in it in its midst."¹³ This unfolding story is one of liberation as well as healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling.¹⁴

As we further consider the role of the faith community, we must be cognizant of the face of the various congregations and communities for establishing effective reentry programs. Developing partnerships are critical however it is essential that the congregations share a like mission for reaching out to this population. Lyle Schaller, contends that "rather than adopting the organizational structure used by all other congregations in that particular religious tradition, this strategy calls for designing a customized ministry plan that is consistent with the purpose, role, type, size and unique personality of congregations and is appropriate for the contemporary community in which that church is called be engaged in ministry."¹⁵ The partnership that ABC involved itself in was to be extremely careful that our partners understood the context of this ministry and what is an overwhelmingly filled community that has its share of social issues particularly of individuals who are offenders. C. Eric Lincoln suggest in his writing of *Is Anybody Listening to Black America* that "in recent years social scientist have come to attribute many of the Negro's social and psychological ills to his self-hatred and resultant self-destructive impulses."¹⁶ Slums, high crime rates, alcoholism, drug addiction, illegitimacy and other social deviations have all been attributed in part to the Negroes acting out of their feeling of inferiority. These issues are examples of

¹³ Edward P. Wimberly, *African American Pastoral Care* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 24.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Lyle E. Schaller, *From Geography to Affinity: How Congregations Can Learn from One Another* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 190.

¹⁶ C. Eric Lincoln, *Is Anybody Listening to Black America* (New York: Seabury Press, 1968), 24.

incarceration for many of the offenders in our communities and it is crucial that the partnerships understand this to be able to help with successful integration and reentry. There are many challenging and devastating factors that surround the incarceration of offenders and it is appropriate for those who desire to engage in rehabilitation to be sensitive to these factors. According to Howard Thurman, “The audience to which the Negro minister preaches is becoming more and more complex.”¹⁷ “He is called upon to give some word of hope to people who live and suffer in a hostile environment; to be a steadying influence to the business and professional men who are finding life to consist largely of a serious point of ethical confusion; to throw a gleam of light upon dark areas where men and women, high school and college boys and girls wander aimlessly because of bewilderment created for them by much reading and study.”¹⁸

Re-entry Programs

There are numerous reentry programs throughout the United States, and there are several faith-based programs that provide cutting-edge ministry to those who have gone through challenges with the criminal justice system. “One program that has received national attention is the Prison Fellowship, which created Out4Life to increase the number of released offenders who successfully reintegrate into communities.”¹⁹ This program was designed to provide the aftercare and necessary support services that most offenders need when exiting the criminal justice system. This program is viewed as a

¹⁷ Walter Earl Fluker and Catherine Tumber, *A Strange Freedom: The Best of Howard Thurman on Religious Experience and Public Life* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), 199.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Prison ReEntry magazine, *Partners for Successful ReEntry*, 2010, 58.

coalition of partners who come together to seek solutions to end recidivism. “The members’ primary tasks are to do the following:

- Build neighborhood-based networks that bring stakeholders together, coordinate services and build community support systems.
- Expand public awareness and encourage the development of faith-based and community-based reentry initiatives; and
- Provide resources, education and practical solutions for building partnerships that address the critical reintegration needs on a grassroots level.”²⁰

The responsibility of this coalition was difficult and tedious. However, supporting the endeavors of the criminal justice system was important to reinforce positive behavior. These partnerships brought together a diverse selection of organizations from faith-based to community groups and from advocacy rights organizations to corporate and business partners.

Sherwood Lingenfelter, in his book *Ministering Cross-Culturally*, wrote: “As a consequence of our choices, the communities we form include some and exclude others.”²¹ “These social arrangements become an important part of our shared culture.”²² As these organizations engaged in making a difference in the lives of others, it is critical that we maintain a understanding of the various cultures we served. “We include those people who reaffirm our values and relationships, and we exclude those who in some way do not measure up to our standards or do not fit within our prescribed sphere of social

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Sherwood G. Lingenfelter and Marvin K. Mayers, *Ministering Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationships* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 22.

²² Ibid.

relationships.”²³ “This pattern of inclusion and exclusion often prompts us to fear and even reject the very people we are sent to serve.”²⁴ Looking beyond those faces that seek help from these coalitions is not merely about color or background but about successful reintegration into our communities. “The church is a religious body only and lacks the expertise to signal concrete solution in the temporal realm.”²⁵ “Through the centuries, the mission of the church, those called out of the worldly system of sin and rebellion, has been to persuade as many people as possible concerning the good news of Jesus Christ. “And he is the one who has the rightful claim to reign as king over us all, for he has given us life, breath and all good things, and not we ourselves.”²⁶ This is the faithful order of the church, to encourage and help those experience transformative power from the world of sin.

Dr. Daphne C. Wiggins asserts “that the mission of the black church has fundamentally been shaped by its dual commitments to the worship of God and to the remedying of the oppressive social, political and economic conditions of African Americans.”²⁷ It is evident that these faith-based organizations serve dual purposes as they attempt to reconcile these individuals to lifelong learning of redemption and reconciliation. Dr. Sir Walter Mack, Jr. in *Passion for Your Kingdom Purpose* said “every man who desires to make a contribution to the kingdom of God must experience

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Michael Sullivant, *Your Kingdom Come: Living Out the Lord's Prayer Everyday* (Lake Mary, FL: Creation House, 2000), 50.

²⁷ Daphne C. Wiggins, *Righteous Content: Black Women's Perspectives of Church and Faith* (New York: University Press, 2005), 94.

seasons of detoxification.”²⁸ This belief helps us to understand that as we reach out to this unique and challenging population that we must put ourselves in their journey to make a difference in their lives. D. James Kennedy put it this way: “Remember, your primary task is to witness.”²⁹

²⁸ Sir Walter Mack, *Passion for your Kingdom Purpose* (Tulsa, OK: Harrison, 2004), 91.

²⁹ D. James Kennedy, *Evangelism Explosion: Equipping Churches for Friendship, Evangelism, Discipleship and Healthy Growth* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1996), 145.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

Historically, the church was not involved in the transformation of prisoners. However, we are aware that God has never abandoned those who were imprisoned—whether justly imprisoned or falsely imprisoned. In fact, God has encouraged his people to seek justice and love mercy, to do good to those who commit evil. God encourages us to seek after those who are lost and reach out to the unsaved. In Gen. 39:20-23, we see that God is watching over Joseph, despite his imprisonment:

Joseph's master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined. But while Joseph was there in the prison, the Lord was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison and he was made responsible for all that was done there. The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.³⁰

While Joseph was in Pharaoh's dungeon, he had a conversion experience and began to use his gifts of dreaming and dream-interpreting for the common good rather than for his own aggrandizement. God's disposition toward Joseph remained favorable, despite the fact that Joseph was considered a criminal. God knew that Joseph had been wrongly accused by the captain of the guard and by Potiphar's wife. Furthermore, he

³⁰ The Holy Bible (NIV), Genesis 39:20-23.

would later forgive his brothers for selling him into slavery, saying: “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.”³¹

God’s attention to the prisoner is again underscored in the Psalms: “Lord, despiseth not the prisoner.”³²; and “The Lord hears the groaning of the prisoner.”³³

Old and New Testament prophets Jeremiah (Chapters 37-39) and John the Baptist (Matt. 4:12; Mark 1:14) were held against their wills, and in the case of John the Baptist, he was executed.

“At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus proclaimed “deliverance to captives.”³⁴ And in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, he identifies with the prisoner when he tells “the righteous that whenever they visited those incarcerated that it was just as if they had visited him. On the cross, Jesus told the repentant thief that they would meet in Paradise.”³⁵ The apostles Peter and Paul are jailed repeatedly in the book of Acts (Chapters 5, 9, 12, 16 and 22), and yet they were frequently released unharmed to continue their preaching. Paul, in fact, described himself as “a prisoner of Christ” in Philemon 1 and in 2 Cor. 11:23.

During the time of Genesis, prisons were less common than they are today. They were used primarily as a holding place before trial. The biblical term for “bondage” is often referred to as being bound. Bondage was a severe consequence of actions, a result

³¹ Gen. 50:20-21.

³² Ibid., Ps. 65:33.

³³ Ibid., Ps. 102:20.

³⁴ Ibid., Luke 4:18.

³⁵ Ibid., Luke 23:42-43.

of sin. Many today are bound by sin, the only remedy for which is the transforming blood of Jesus Christ. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God, but many sins do not result in physical imprisonment. The severity of a crime plays a major role in punishment. In early times, punishment was either restitution by work in the salt mines, inside a ship's galley, or death—thus, prisons were unnecessary.

Society in early times often viewed prisoners as useless, troublemakers, and outcasts, and there was no place for them in society. Over the past few decades, Christians and government agencies have begun to realize that ex-offenders can make positive contributions to society, provided they are properly educated, trained, and rehabilitated. The belief now is that society can save millions of dollars if we work to restore the lives of ex-offenders, but this requires a collaborative effort by government, corporate human services, non-profits, and faith institutions.

Others take a dimmer view of rehabilitation: “Once a criminal, always a criminal,” they say. But if we find a multi-disciplinary approach to assisting prisoners, then there is a chance for redemption.

The treatment of prisoners in early times varied by location. However, their treatment was often based on a class system, depending on the prisoners' economic, social or political standing. Some were given more favorable treatment than others, especially if their status was evident. If a person were not considered profitable, then his chances for success were negligible. As noted above, the apostle Paul was considered a prisoner of Jesus Christ. Although he served numerous stints in jail, he was considered profitable, a value to Jesus Christ. Unprofitable also can mean of “no value” or very little

significance to society. During Roman times, we have evidence that once they came to Christ, they became profitable again, in the eyes of Christians.

“The Mamertime Prison (a.k.a. Carcere Mamertino or San Pietro in Carcere) is an ancient prison at the foot of the Capitoline Hill in Rome ... The Mamertime Prison is mentioned by several ancient writers, including Livy, who dated its construction to the 7th Century BC under King Ancus: It was found that in so great a multitude the distinction between right and wrong had become obscured, and crimes were being secretly committed. Accordingly to overawe men’s growing lawlessness, a prison was built in the midst of the city above the Forum.”³⁶

Prisoners there often served life sentences with no hope of release. Prisoners during that time were viewed as a waste to society, and there was no recognition of reform or rehabilitation. Rather than allowing prisoners to waste away, they were often put to work as slave labors. Prisoners with life sentences would never walk the streets again, and this harsh punishment was often viewed as treatment.

Prisons were designed for isolation and separation from society. Thus, the concept was to eliminate any chance that criminals could again harm society. They were placed in seclusion, and this was considered a permanent situation. “Authorized by the laws of the federal government, fifty states, over three thousand counties, and uncounted municipalities, corrections is administered by public and private organizations. “The primary purpose of corrections is to be responsible for the management of people who

³⁶ Sacred Destinations, <http://www.sacred-destinations.com/italy/rome-mamertine-prison>, (Accessed March 31, 2011).

have been accused or convicted of criminal offenses.”³⁷ It is believed that these prisons had some influence on the first penitentiaries in the United States. From an historical standpoint, there was not much latitude given to prisoners until we move further into the evolution of prisons.

“Jails and prisons seem obviously well designed to punish and incapacitate. They seem less well suited for rehabilitation and restoration.”³⁸ This concept evolved so that prisoners were placed in jails until they could pay their way out. Conditions were not easy for those who could not pay, and many died without gaining freedom. Authorities devised creative methods to deter prisoners from paying. Not until early in America did concepts such as leniency and bail evolve. Still today, Americans continued to look down on prisoners. Prisoners were instrumental in being at the forefront of providing labor to establish this nation. “The community also benefits through receiving the free labor that communities service programs provide.”³⁹ When we look at the punishment of prisoners today, we will gain an understanding of an historical background of diversion. It was believed that, possibly because of prison overcrowding, diversion emerged as an alternative to keeping individuals in the system. “In this country, probation began with the innovative work of John Augustus, a Boston bootmaker who was the first to stand bail for defendants under authority of the Boston Police Court. But the roots of probation lie in earlier attempts, primarily in England, to mitigate the harshness of the criminal

³⁷ Todd R. Clear and Harry R. Dammer, *The Offender in the Community* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 2000), 26.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 23-33.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 112.

law.”⁴⁰ Attitudes toward probation have changed over the years. Judicial officials favor this approach as a means for prisoners to avoid jail time. During the course of time and with many legislative acts to follow, there was a movement to provide safe, secure, and reasonable accommodations for prisoners. The philosophy was rapidly becoming one of correction rather than strictly punishment. French sociologist Michel Foucault, in his book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, describes the “transformation of prisons from places of torture and execution to places of disciplinary punishment, where a prisoner’s progress is assessed by professionals.”⁴¹

Reform, Rehabilitation and Reintegration

Historically, the approach has been to take offenders and work aggressively to change their perspective on life for reentry. In this section, the author will examine three phases to assist the offender in regaining status in the community—reform, rehabilitation, and reintegration.

Reform

“The earliest orientation toward community correction was based upon a view of offenders as morally flawed individuals.”⁴² They have often encountered negative social behavior and have allowed themselves to be subjected to the criminal justice system. From crimes such as robbery, to larceny, to rape, etc., they consistently run afoul of the law. In many cases, repeat offenders are prompted by poor choices. Drug and alcohol

⁴⁰ Ibid., 55.

⁴¹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 61.

⁴² Clear and Dammer, *Offender in the Community*, 59.

addiction and illiteracy also play a role, so many offenders are required to undergo extensive mental health and substance abuse treatment as well as basic education. These morally flawed individuals function unlike others in society and are subject to commit criminal acts. It is important to intervene with job training, social skills, educational focus, and positive reinforcement to rehabilitate the offender with early intervention. While offenders may be viewed as morally flawed individuals, there is still the belief that their lives can be transformed with appropriate treatment.

Reform is crucial to the success of an ex-offender. However, this process does not happen quickly. The goal, ultimately, is to shape the ex-offender into a productive citizen. Experts and community professionals are seeking ways to address these concerns. If offenders can be steered toward becoming productive citizens, they are less likely to return to the criminal justice system. “It was commonly required that offenders live upright and virtuous lives, and what would today be considered minor violations, such as drinking or violating a curfew, would result in serious consequences, even return to prison.”⁴³ With this concept, the focus should be on demonstrating and teaching them how to contribute and maintain a civil lifestyle. Socially defiant behaviors are inherited through improper training, which is a result of lack of positive growth and development from poor family backgrounds. Many of these offenders, male and female, lack appropriate role models and decision-making skills. It is not uncommon to find that these inmates have been failed by other social service and support systems.

The reform policy sets out to help offenders understand that they must obey the law. Under this policy, they not only must obey the law but show evidence of an

⁴³ Ibid.

accomplished lifestyle through good family, good jobs, and good neighborly relations.⁴⁴

This process is crucial because society often views reform efforts with skepticism, unconvinced that offenders are capable of change.

Lawmakers also have joined the effort to reform ex-offenders. One act that was recently signed into law was the Second Chance Act of 2005, initiated by Congressman Danny Davis of Chicago. "This federal act calls for expanding reentry services for people leaving prisons."⁴⁵ With this legislation, reform options should be easier to access for ex-offenders. As mentioned, offenders often have difficulty accessing housing, employment, and public assistance. Therefore, the Second Chance Act should have a positive impact. Indeed, reentry services must be a priority in our communities, as they allow ex-offenders a chance to become productive citizens.

Under the reform model, mentors were essential to the success of those re-entering society. "In early historical times, ministers and retired policemen operated as watchmen and missionaries to criminal classes."⁴⁶ These individuals were considered mentors or caretakers who provided the mental and psychological support that was needed for ex-offenders to successfully re-enter society. It is interesting to note that both of these professions required experience and knowledge to assist ex-offenders in charting a successful plan of action.

Most ex-offenders have made bad choices, and ministers are able to provide them with pastoral counseling and career choices. In the past few decades, probation officers

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ U.S. Rep. Danny K. Davis, Second Chance Act, http://davis.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=29, (Accessed, March 6, 2001).

⁴⁶ Clear and Dammer, *Offender in the Community*, 60.

have functioned as the intermediary of law enforcement to provide background and periodic criminal checks to ensure active presence in the community. The probation officer performs extensive checks and visitations. “However, while the judicial system relies heavily on these professionals to track ex-offenders, it was determined that these returning citizens also needed a job.”⁴⁷

Reintegration

The second model for reform—reintegration—was consistent with President Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society program of the 1960s, which sought to end poverty and discrimination,⁴⁸ both of which were seen as barriers to improving the lives of ex-offenders.

Generally, most ex-offenders have encountered poverty throughout their lives, which closed many doors to them. The concept of reintegrating offenders into the social fabric of the community was important to assisting them in adjusting to reentry. “It was equally important to be involved in job training programs, creation of special employment opportunities, and emphasis on community-based programs.”⁴⁹

This era of reintegration presented opportunities for successful transition and movement in a positive direction. If job training and employment opportunities do not occur, ex-offenders are left with limited resources for transitioning. Many have limited skills. Therefore, a special effort is needed to increase available opportunities.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 61.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Many ex-offenders are abruptly turned away at the door of employment. They then face returning to a life of crime and poverty. This not only occurs in the employment arena but also in other facets of their life, such as housing, voting, and general living conditions. This rejection has not reduced the recidivism rate but has raised it to alarming levels.

It is incumbent upon society to think creatively and innovatively about programs that can enhance the skills for growth and development. We realize that, because of the nature of crime, not every profession or trade is suitable for ex-offenders.

Rehabilitation

The third era that provides continuity in assisting the offender is the rehabilitation era. “The work of Sigmund Freud, exploring the anatomy of emotional functioning, was a powerful new idea and led to the development of psychotherapy and the field of psychology.”⁵⁰ “Prisons provide a setting for a medical model that moves from confinement and punishment toward treatment.”⁵¹ The rehabilitation model views each offender as being in need of mental health treatment. This model could prove more effective than the mental health treatments currently being used.

Freud, who is considered an expert in psychotherapy and psychology, is right to believe that there is a correlation between these areas. Emotional functioning is the basis for decisions made in violent and criminal situations. Determining the thought process through mental health counseling may be a solution to addressing these issues. “More

⁵⁰ Ibid., 60.

⁵¹ Ibid.

than half of all American prison and jail inmates show symptoms of mental disorder, but fewer than a third receive treatment.”⁵²

The rehabilitation model can occur before the reentry process, as many of the symptoms for this problem exist behind bars. Inmates who have experienced traumatic events, such as assault, drug addiction, recidivism, and other circumstances, are a high risk for mental health treatment.

The rehabilitation era presents a medical model that questions the role of correctional officers. This may explain the breakdown or failure of the mental health system. Shaping this system to become more effective and efficient requires careful attention to rebuilding the mental health system. Michael J. Fitzpatrick, executive director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, a national grass-roots organization dedicated to improving the lives of the mentally ill, said “results indicate that the mental health system is failing long before people enter the criminal justice system and long after they leave it.”⁵³

Opinions vary on either side of this issue. However, we can likely agree that regardless of whether it is on the outside or inside of the system, we must do a better job in addressing these issues that prevent rehabilitation. The goal is to keep individuals from coming to prison. However, if they must enter, let us provide them with the support they need. When we look from an historical perspective at why prisons were created, we are convinced that it has been reserved for those whose track records are so serious that they cannot serve their sentence in the community but only in confinement.

⁵² Michael J. Sniffer, *Prisons Lacking Mental Health Treatment*, Prison ReEntry magazine, September 2006.

⁵³ Ibid., 1.

The focus of this writing is to establish a model for transitional ministry for ex-offenders. After reviewing these models, housing remains a priority. Every ex-offender, when they reenter society, must have stable housing to reintegrate and become law-abiding citizens. Many of them are not able to enter into the same communities from which they originated due to social behaviors. Adequate housing is often a key factor in determining whether an individual will revert to crime. We cannot allow these offenders to fail by placing them in dangerous and unsupervised environments. Halfway houses also provide a transitional environment, especially for those who have become institutionalized and accustomed to a structured existence.

Biblical Foundation Old Testament

In reviewing the Old Testament scriptures, we find many examples of how the Bible supports the requirement that we show compassion to those in prisons as well as to those who are re-entering society. The prophet Isaiah immediately comes to mind.

In this section, the author will examine the text found in Isaiah 61:1-3 and will use it as a model for establishing a transitional housing ministry for ex-offenders. The passage is written as follows:

“The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent me to heal the broken hearted and to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, To console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the Lord that He may be glorified.”⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Isa. 61:1-3.

“The book of Isaiah is the first of the writings of the biblical prophets, and Isaiah, the author, is generally considered to the greatest prophet.”⁵⁵ Isaiah, like many prophets, was popular until he began to proclaim an unpopular message to a reluctant people. He warned the people concerning sin and spoke against the sins of Israel and Judah. The first half of the book of Isaiah (Chapters 1-39) contains revealing information of how he called Judah, Israel, and the surrounding nations to repent of their sins. However, this author will discuss the latter chapters that “are filled with consolation and hope as Isaiah unfolds God promise of blessings through his Messiah.”⁵⁶ We find in these passages a message of forgiveness, comfort, and hope. Isaiah describes the Messiah as both a suffering servant and a sovereign Lord.

In the book *Jesus and the Suffering Servant*, co-authors Willam H. Bellinger, Jr., and William R. Farmer noted that “the phrase “deeds of the Anointed One” clearly points to Jesus fulfilling the role of the Servant, the Anointed One in Isaiah 61:1.”⁵⁷ This author concurs, as we believe that he had been appointed to fulfill this role to deliver a message of salvation to those who remain captive and bound in prison. His anointing was symbolic of his ability to bring restoration and peace to these oppressed individuals. The author said that in the disappointment and disillusionment that followed, “the promises of the restoration and Israel’s purpose were reaffirmed.”⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Ibid., 1386.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ William R. Bellinger and William R. Farmer, *Jesus and the Suffering Servant* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998), 224-225.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 157.

The suffering servant, that figure in Deutero-Isaiah who bares suffering in hope of redemption—perhaps an individual but understood as Israel in exile—was Jesus. The transfer of the everlasting covenant, originally made with David to the faithful of Israel, was taken very seriously. “Thus, Servant Israel is anointed to bring good news to the afflicted and the everlasting covenant is reaffirmed.”⁵⁹

It is evident that the suffering servant was sent to bring good news to the faithful in this period of seeking restoration, comfort, and peace. “The faithful are described as the fulfillment of the messianic promise of Isaiah 11:1 and they are the shoots of God’s planning who will mature into oaks of righteousness.”⁶⁰

“The Book of Isaiah is viewed as a message of salvation.”⁶¹ This prophet was sent to proclaim the good news but was given the gift of speaking to people about hope in the days ahead. “They are differentiated as being a proclamation made by a man who was aware that God had sent and equipped him to proclaim the message of salvation.”⁶²

Isaiah was often referred to as a chosen servant. The theme of this text conveys a message that those who are now free from bondage must hear a message to prepare them for the kingdom. This message is being delivered by someone who has a call to prophecy. It was important during this time that those who had experienced years of imprisonment be set free, that they be given an opportunity to experience salvation, and the way to experience salvation was through this prophetic voice. “A leading feature in this

⁵⁹ Ibid., 158.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 224-225.

⁶¹ Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1969), 365.

⁶² Ibid.

proclamation made by the messenger of salvation is the accumulation of mediatorial functions, and of the qualities for it, that are here heaped upon one person.”⁶³

The role of the prophet has been commissioned by the Spirit and is now ready to be used for this service to enter and proclaim a message of hope. Westermann looks at other scriptures that may be comparable to this time and describes the same type of message.

For example, Westermann indicates that “...there is a closer parallel in Micah 3:8 where the speaker, again a prophet, and speaking in the first person, says of himself, ‘But as for me, I am filled with the Spirit of Yahweh ... to declare to Jacob his transgression.’”⁶⁴

The practice of bondage would no longer be an issue for the people of Jerusalem. Likewise, we today must forgive and set free those ex-offenders who seek to re-enter society.

The prophets were voices sent by God to proclaim freedom to all who were in chains, both spiritually and physically.

“Since this is the final utterance of an oracle against false prophets, Micah may possibly have taken up, with modification, a stereotyped form current in prophecy of salvation.”⁶⁵

The other scriptural reference is found in Leviticus 25:10, where it states: “Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each one of you is to return to his family property and each to his own clan.

These are other prophetic messages of how this year of Jubilee shall be proclaimed. As we observed from the writing, these people were suffering at this time. These inhabitants were to experience their freedom and return to their own family environments. It is evident from these messages that the year of Jubilee was to come and they would experience this time of salvation. “The prophet’s task is finally to comfort all who mourn.”⁶⁶

The prophet has also been anointed to do the assignment that was given to him. As we look at the term “anointed,” we must identify with the defining of anointing. Westermann indicated that anointing is no more than a rather loftier expression for sending. “Nevertheless, in and through this proclaiming he is to effect a change on those to whom he is sent.”⁶⁷ The question remains whether this anointing will make the prophet official or position him for service.

Historically, prophets who were anointed for service had the latitude of being ready, of reaching out to the captives and being in an official capacity to serve. In the writing *Isaiah*, the author Sebastian Kizhakkeyil concurs “that it is referred to as the anointing of the servant.”⁶⁸ It also can be viewed as being related more to God’s gift of his spirit than to the oil used in ceremonies. The process for anointing servants is not clearly defined, but we can assume that it was God’s gift to anoint his servant for service.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 367.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 366.

⁶⁸ Sebastian Kizhakkeyil, *Isaiah* (Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 2006), 365.

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me” was the beginning of realizing that by the Spirit being on this prophet, it was a special anointing that gave him the leverage to do what was necessary for providing the message of hope. “The prophet identified himself as the anointed one mentioned in the poem and declared that this mission was spelled out in this prophecy and that the Messianic era had arrived.”⁶⁹ “Together with the anointing of the prophet with the spirit, Yahweh commissions him to carry out specific duties of consolation and liberation.”⁷⁰ This gives the prophet the latitude to move forward in reaching the people with how to receive salvation. The prophet is now free and has the ability to preach the good news to those who are oppressed. Yahweh sanctions this prophet to console those who are in mourning, liberate those who are oppressed, and give them the freedom they need to move forward. “The anointed one has to proclaim a year of favor from Yahweh and a day of vengeance for our God.”⁷¹ Yahweh grants the power for the prophet to proclaim a year of favor.

The prophet has numerous tasks in this assignment, and it is his position to follow through in accomplishing what has been set before him. This person has been personally chosen and empowered by God for a purpose, and that purpose is to bring about the deliverance of his people so that they will be righteous, just as the Servant is said to have done. God has equipped this prophet to bring this good news in times of distress, so that these people will find comfort in difficult times. In this first word, “Spirit” was considered perhaps as aspects of authority or Kingship. The Spirit must be empowered by

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid., 366.

God and choose a messenger to carry forth the message. The Spirit is authorized by him to deliver the good news. It is believed, then, that by placing God's justice and mercy at the heart of the rebuilding project, the Servant enables the community to reach the highest purpose possible for any human group to display God's glory.

This project is achievable by understanding that God's mercy and justice are at the center of any attempt to rebuild lives from times of captivity and bondage. The Servant is the leading force to work toward bringing restoration for any human group. It is also realistic to believe that the servant has a specific task to accomplish in this scene.

The author Paul Hanson states: "It seems entirely appropriate, therefore, that the scene of being called to the role of servant should be experienced by a leader within the circle of Second Isaiah's disciples who desire to be used by the Lord as an instrument of reconciliation and healing and who passes that calling on to others in the community who are open to God's call."⁷² We can identify with this meaning of the role of servant as this community of faith will examine opportunities to bring healing and reconciliation to a community of oppressed people.

Our charge is to fulfill this assignment by reaching out to this group and sharing the meaning of God's call. When we fulfilled the role of servant, we have genuinely accomplished reaching out to this underserved population. Our responsibility as servants is undoubtedly to reach out to those who are broken and need consolation. In Isaiah 61:1, the prophet has been given the authority to reach these people in need. Hanson said that "the identity of this servant is inextricably linked with commitment to God's will, a commitment to be present as an agent of God's mercy to the broken and the oppressed as

⁷² Paul Hanson, *Interpretation, Isaiah 40-66* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1995), 224.

one announcing that after years of mourning the time had arrived in which God will restore the condition of justice and peace and characterize God's reign."⁷³ This servant/prophet is recognized as a powerful and influential force. The author John Oswalt contends that "the servant has been anointed for a specific role and sent into the vineyard among the needy and the chapter speaks of the character of the people of God when they experience the deliverance that the arm of the Lord procures for them."⁷⁴ The section begins with the Servant/Messiah's announcement of his role and concludes with a call for the people to enter into the salvation that God has made available to them and to embrace their role as "the Holy People."⁷⁵

Biblical Foundation New Testament

Matthew's Gospel was written to the Jews, likely during the period between A.D. 60 and A.D. 65. Matthew was a Jewish tax collector who eventually became one of Jesus' disciples. It was during this time that Jesus was teaching his disciples about the future and what they could expect before his return and how they should live. Matthew's Gospel forms a link between the Old Testament and New Testament because of its emphasis on the fulfillment of prophecy. It is believed that this gospel was written to present clear evidence that Jesus is the Messiah, the Savior.

Mark Dever, author of *The Message of the New Testament*, summarized "Matthew 25: 35-37 as the time of judgment where the conflict grows as the opposition

⁷³ Ibid., 224.

⁷⁴ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986), 562.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

to Jesus intensifies in the first half of the section and then Jesus promise of judgment upon Israel for rejecting the Messiah becomes obvious in a long teaching section in the second half.”⁷⁶ This time was critical as the world was being judged for its actions in how Christians were treating the world around them. We also find that this was indicative of how God would judge the leaders and destroy the temple and everybody would be judged by God. According to many scholars, “Matthew intends to describe a remarkable conversion experience on the part of those who executed Jesus.”⁷⁷

The gospel according to Matthew speaks to a climate in the community that was much like the one we witness today. As this author seeks solutions to support “the least of these,” the message of Jesus Christ was, whatever you do for these, you have done it to me. A parable was used to describe how we have mistreated the least of these and what implications it has on our love for Christ. Therefore, as we work to develop a collaborative approach for finding housing and supportive services for ex-offenders, it is incumbent upon the faith community to remember that our actions reflect not only how we treat one another or those less fortunate than us but how we would treat God in this challenging time.

“The believer prepares for the parousia by living the imperative to love one’s neighbors, especially the marginalized.”⁷⁸ Reaching out to a unique and challenged population and honoring this call is incumbent upon each of us as we live for the

⁷⁶ Mark Dever, *The Message of the New Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Good News Publishers, 2005), 43.

⁷⁷ John Riches and David C. Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew in the Roman Imperial Context* (London: T & T International, 2005), 102.

⁷⁸ W.D. Davies and Dalce C. Allison, Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew* (Edinburgh, Scotland: T&T Clark, 1997), 432.

parousia. Understanding the command of supporting these areas of poverty, hunger, sickness, and incarceration are acts of mercy that we will encounter as we live in time of struggle. “By what criteria will “all the nations” be judged?”⁷⁹ The answer is by their deeds of compassion toward the “least of these.”⁸⁰ “The least are clearly defined as those in greatest need.”⁸¹ Human fragility is something that we must acknowledge and seek solutions to as we deal with human oppression in our communities.

The setting of this passage describes the unfortunate circumstances of people of this community of faith. The poor, sick, unhealthy, incarcerated, poverty stricken, and perhaps even homeless, were not to be overlooked due to our own selfish desires. Jesus, on his missionary journey, made his way through the towns and villages healing the sick, feeding the hungry, giving sight to the blind, and bringing life to those who were victims of these social ills. His belief and mission were that people deserve to be healed from their infirmities. He taught his disciples, and the same holds true today. We cannot turn a deaf ear to the needs of this population. P.K. McCary wrote in *Black Bible Chronicles* that “the Almighty expected that his leaders should be on the one with Him; but more so, they should be fair in all the things they did for the children of Israel.”⁸² In seeking to assist those who have encountered difficult and challenging situations, we must be certain that we are fair in the treatment of people. As we focus on missions and ministry, the desire of Jesus is that we reach the lost and not judge them for their conditions. Rather, we must seek ways to restore them to a healthy and wholesome life.

⁷⁹ Daniel J. Harrington, *The Synoptic Gospels Set Free: Preaching Without Anti-Judaism* (New York: Paulist Press, 2004), 60.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² P.K. McCary, *Black Bible Chronicles* (New York: African American Family Press, 1993), 176.

The author used a parable to describe acts of mercy and all that we can do every day. These acts do not depend on wealth, ability, or intelligence; they are simple acts freely given and freely received. We have no excuse to neglect those who have deep needs, and we cannot hand over this responsibility to the church or government. It was Jesus' caring nature to respond to these needs. Why are these acts of mercy so important? "Because doing them for the needy is effectively doing them for Jesus, the glorious son of man who is to preside at the Last Judgment."⁸³

Jesus was conveying a message of how we must not neglect the people of our community, and on more than one occasion he warned that we would be admonished for our deeds and actions. He shared an analogy of separating the sheep from the goats and the dialogues between the judge and the person judged. But there is no thread of similitude carried through the discourse, and therefore it is rather to be called a draught, or delineation of the final judgment, and not a parable.

How we interpret this analogy is essential as we look at how to examine ourselves for the coming judgment. The question remains: Did we seek to address the needs of the "least of these?" Connecting the "least of these" to a relationship with Christ will enable them to realize that there is hope in Christ Jesus, despite the shortcomings and difficulty that they may face. "Deep, intimate fellowship with the Holy Spirit involves an admission of human weakness, the relinquishment of our illusions of being in control, and an embrace of the mysterious and intuitive."⁸⁴

⁸³ Harrington, *Synoptic Gospels Set Free*, 61.

⁸⁴ Brad Braxton, *Preaching Paul* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 86.

Many times the discussion could be referred to as hospitality to strangers. Jesus encouraged believers in these villages to provide services to the strangers who were among them. It was not uncommon for him to reach out to the less fortunate, regardless of whether or not he was acquainted with them. His ministry was to focus on brothers and sisters, regardless of their socio-economic background, race, creed, color, or national origin.

Jesus conveyed a message of hope to an overlooked community, but he also challenged the masses to understand that it was their Christian duty to help transform the lives of the poor and oppressed. It was a movement to change attitudes to reflect a loving and caring community.

David Gurtner and John Nolland wrote in *Build Upon the Rock*, suggest “that Jesus does not become righteous by healing the sick, feeding the hungry, driving out demons, and proclaiming the kingdom of God, but as a righteous one, he did these things and fulfilled all righteousness.”⁸⁵ Jesus spoke of those on the right as the righteous ones. In his final judgment, he said, he will separate those who were obedient from those who were disobedient. Rewards and punishments are both at the disposal of God, and he will reward the good and punish the wicked. The kingdom is not for everybody, but only for those who love God and obey God’s will. This message of good versus evil allows Christians to look at how they can be obedient to the will of God in order to see the kingdom of God.

Brad Braxton wrote in the book *No Longer Slaves*: “To whatever degree African Americans believe that God’s word may be found in the Bible, biblical interpretation

⁸⁵ David Gurtner and John Nolland, *Built Upon the Rock: Studies in the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: William D. Erdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 81.

must be related to the present struggle in a racist society.”⁸⁶ This helps us to understand the oppression and struggle that not only African Americans endured but the challenges that people encountered were difficult to rebound. It could be viewed as a racist mentality or an attempt to keep people’s lives from being restored. The gospel message was one of redemption and supporting these individuals to total restoration. It is important that the faith community undertake this collaboration and determine how it may address these issues. We recognize that there is strength in collaboration, and that to fulfill the kingdom of God by answering the call of our brothers and sisters in need is our duty. Jesus presented himself as a model for the disciples and others. If we are to be followers of Christ, we must embrace this message and come together as one body.

How is the faith community to change its position of complacency, distrust, and arrogance if not by looking after those who are in need? Christ gave us a ministry of reconciliation, and we must use this method to reconcile our differences and support those in crisis. In *Household and Discipleship*, Warren Carter says, “After the man departs, Jesus explains to the disciples that while commitment to the wealth often prevents entering the kingdom, deliverance is possible by God’s power. He begins by declaring the possibility of a rich person.”⁸⁷

When God sees us as a body of faith coming together to serve this present age, he can then assume the posture that people are being obedient to his will and that all of his people are being served. The transformation of a community is dependent upon the contributions of those who have resources and opportunities to make those kinds of

⁸⁶ Brad Braxton, *No Longer Slaves* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2002), 29.

⁸⁷ Warren Carter, *Household and Discipleship: A Study of Matthew* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 123.

changes. God has empowered our churches, synagogues, temples, and houses of worship to come together on one accord, and he can fulfill the promises that have been made to us as Christians. The faith collaborative approach can be a powerful model for others as we demonstrate our commitment to helping “the least of these.” As we observed the actions and responses to how the church overall faith community responded to this crisis that face these ex-offenders, many thoughts come to mind to whether there is forgiveness, reconciliation and subsequently reintegration into the community. We often struggle with total forgiveness and his justice been served before allowing these individuals to just reappear into our lives. Ivor Jones in the *Gospel of Matthew* “used the term “justice” that expresses the practical side of the obedience to Christ.”⁸⁸ We can assert whether or not justice has been served appropriately on these persons who have broken the law. Jones contends that “justice means doing of the divine will and purpose.”⁸⁹ If we are to be in accordance to his divine will, have we allowed justice to serve its real purpose? It is our duty and responsibility to obedient to the will of Christ, therefore we must understand that justice is served and following the will of Christ remains in our journey. Jones challenges the reader in the final parable that “ask us to face inadequacies of understanding and awareness.”⁹⁰ Whether we have searched our own inner selves to gain understanding of our faults and failures remains unseen however to be forgiving requires our undivided attention of ourselves. This parable raises our consciousness in examining who we are and that we are apt to make mistakes as well. Jones says that “we cannot

⁸⁸ Ivor H Jones, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Peterborough, England: Epworth Press, 1994), 46.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 155.

always know what is God's will."⁹¹ This parable focuses on the sheep and the goats and its meaning to us as Christians. In his description of the sheep and the goats, Jones said that "sometimes the interpretation of the sheep and the goats has been restricted to the question of how Christians have been helped or rejected."⁹² "The little ones are identified as Christian missionaries arriving in some town or village."⁹³ It remains a question of have we given our full attention to not overlooking the Christians or even the least of these in reaching out to serve this society. The Sheep and Goats were an interpretation of how we as Christians are viewed in this parable.

Ex-offenders have numerous issues that they must contend with and as Christians the immediate factors that surface are guilt and redemption. Has transformation occurred while being confined in the prison cell? Lewis Sherrill suggest that "I am free only when my existence depends on myself."⁹⁴ It is a burden of responsibility that individuals must be aware of to experience freedom in moving forward. "If the seat of conflict is viewed as being in man himself, where does responsibility for its solutions lie?"⁹⁵ First, responsibility for the solution of his conflict lies with the individual himself. Clearly, the author believes that the individual must take full responsibility for his actions and know that his actions reflect totally upon his own behavior. It is believed then that because of his responsibility, he must find a solution to his own issues to resolve them. As feeling, "guilt" refers to the "emotional aspect of the experience of one who stands in judgment

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Lewis Sherrill, *Guilt and Redemption* (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press), 47.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 54.

upon himself, and condemns himself or at least acknowledges others' condemnation of himself as deserved."⁹⁶ Each of us will likely see the expression of guilt written upon the faces of these individuals however it is our responsibility to help them overcome these feeling of guilt and get on with fulfilling their lifestyle in a positive manner. In the spirit of redemption, it is up to the offender to seek redemption from his sinful past. Moving ourselves away from the old and seeking restoration for a change helps us to focus our attention on improving our lifestyle. "In the Pauline conception of redemption the Spirit of God permeates the entire body."⁹⁷ Fully cleansing ourselves from the world in which we lived in is essential to help move one to a road of recovery. Redemption is critical for us as to move beyond the past and seeking change for the future. In the book, *Why Suffering in Redemption: A New Interpretation of the Theology of the Passion in the Summa Theologica*, Aquinas and Bracken affirms "that Christ's Passion delivers us not only from Satan but also from God's punishments."⁹⁸ If we are followers of Christ, then our lives will be closely align to his will as we seek redemption. Redemption removes us away from the evil and wickedness of Satan and restores our lives closely to God. "The doctrine of redemption was presented piecemeal to Christian in churches, Christians who did not yet know how their own continuing guilt, hostility, and anxiety could be put with utter confidence in the hands of the same God who had already begun to redeem them."⁹⁹ Christians had to identify with their guilt and realize that God was ready for

⁹⁶ Ibid., 62.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 208.

⁹⁸ Thomas Aquinas and W. Jerome Bracken, *Why Suffering in Redemption? A New Interpretation of the Theology of the Passion in the Summa Theologica* (New York: Fordham Press, 1978), 337.

⁹⁹ Sherrill, *Guilt and Redemption*, 217.

reconciliation and forgiveness. Christians also were unaware of how God was able to look beyond what fault we had and allow us to be redeemed for our failures. “By obtaining our forgiveness, Christ delivers us from Satan, and by offering a superabundant satisfaction, Christ dissolves our own debts to God.”¹⁰⁰ We are then considered as the writer has previously stated free upon ourselves. The same hold true of the offenders that we seek to find solutions for that that can release the guilt and be closer to the will of God. This action allows the offenders as well as the Christians to resume life without any reluctance to the previous sin. “In so far as redemption is part of God’s providence, it is a process by which man is converted from sin and transformed into glory.”¹⁰¹ This is an experience that can enrich our lives fully based on the process of redemption.

Transformation is a critical component of redemption as it frees us from the bondage of sin and places us in the realm of his glory. “It has been shown that in redeeming man, Christ also saves himself.”¹⁰² Christ came to save us from our sins and redemption is a process of which Christ works in us individually and collectively. Redemption prepares us for a new life in Christ that we may began a new role in our lives. Finally, “by redemption He brings himself into a new relationship with man.”¹⁰³

David Kelsey wrote in *Imagining Redemption* that “in colloquial English, for example, the word redemption is often used to describe improvements in performances that are considered to have been poor or bad.”¹⁰⁴ Redemption then is a process where we

¹⁰⁰ Aquinas and Bracken, *Why Suffering in Redemption*, 337.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 345.

¹⁰² Ibid., 349.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ David Kelsey, *Imagining Redemption* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2005), 21.

have made strides to renew ourselves from the evil that we have committed. It is also an opportunity to seek forgiveness and find ourselves in becoming a new creation in Christ. Kelsey further states that “Christians use the word redemption and related words in relation to practices that make up their common life as Christians.”¹⁰⁵ Typically, we think that redemption is an easy way to satisfy our negative behavior however to seek redemption it should be taken seriously to free ourselves from the works of Satan. Many who seek and experience redemption consider this to be a different way of life. We have identified a change in our heart and soul to move further into forgiveness. “What gives life to a human body is called its soul.”¹⁰⁶ Our soul is the center of our body especially when it comes to our actions and deeds. The soul is the essence of our thought process for making decisions both good and bad however we rely on our soul as the heart of our decisions. Kelsey believes that “the soul is spiritual” not “material.”¹⁰⁷ “It is the interior, not the exterior, of human beings.”¹⁰⁸ What is necessarily on the outside does not reflect what is on the inside of us. Our soul dictates to us the interior of who we are as human beings. When we have experienced the process of redemption, our souls point us in a positive manner and direction. Kelsey further states that “in traditional accounts, God’s redemptive relating makes a difference initially and chiefly in people’s souls as opposed

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 66.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

their bodies.”¹⁰⁹ We can then acknowledge based in this manner that our souls are critical to the success of our redemption process.

Collen Carpenter Cullinan wrote *In Redeeming the Story* about how Theologian MaJorie Suchocki pointed out that “true justice, like true redemption would have to mean the “redress of evil and the restoration of well-being to those for whom it has been violated or lost,” but laments that such a justice can never be achieved: too often injustice has bruised its victims, making reparation impossible.”¹¹⁰ This is a feeling of how society views justice and redemption when so much harm has been caused to their souls. It literally takes long periods of time for healing and restoration to these victims and many times forgiveness is not even a consideration for many of them. Cullen also stated that “How is a broken mind repaired, a lost limb returned, a stunted ability to love reshaped, a murder undone?”¹¹¹ The damage that is caused both physically, mentally and psychologically is often times irreparable because of the long-term damage that can be done. Cullen raises issues that are common among victims because of the hurt and harm that it does to so many victims and families. “The more one begins to consider the problem of justice, the more impossible and visionary any full justice appears to be, only if the past can somehow be brought into the present and only if a sufficient flexibility of vision can allow radical diversities to co-exist in well-being, only then can justice in its fullest dimensions be established.”¹¹² “Under the circumstances of our finitude, however,

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Collen Carpenter Cullinan, *Redeeming the Story* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2004), 89.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

such conditions cannot be secured.”¹¹³ This is then an issue that does not bring restoration to victims because of the uncertainties of how justice is handled in our current system. Cullen further shares that “Redemption, if it is to include justice, and the restoration of wrongs, requires that the past be open to change and renewal.”¹¹⁴ “In other words, redemption requires that the future change the past.”¹¹⁵ Certainly, as we have looked at this term of redemption it could serve as a tool in the future to change ones past. Offenders, for example would have a total different outlook on their future if they have likely been through an experience of redemption and focus on how to seek transformation for a different approach to life. “The New Testament offers us a variety of images that attempt to capture the meaning of redemption: sacrifice, ransom, obedience, the renewal of creation and resurrection all take the turn at center stage.”¹¹⁶

Vincent Wilkin wrote in *From Limbo to Heaven* that “In the Old Testament, redemption is a synonym for liberation from slavery.”¹¹⁷ As we have discussed previously, people are redeemed from their sins and this belief is that that they are liberated which means they are free as people have been freed from slavery. Redemption gives individuals the privilege to be lifted from bondage and act in a manner of freedom. Wilkin contends that “when the Son of Man comes with power and majesty, then look up and lift your heads for your redemption is at hand.”¹¹⁸ This assertion allows us to believe

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 91.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 13.

¹¹⁷ Vincent Wilkin, *From Limbo to Heaven* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961), 119.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 59.

that upon the arrival of the Son of Man we have been given a sense of freedom. The Son of Man is the only one who has the power to grant us this freedom and allow us to experience redemption. Jonathan Edwards wrote in the *History of Redemption* that “In that redemption, Christ did not only redeem the people from the Egyptians, but he redeemed them from the devils, the gods of Egypt; for before, they had been in a state of servitude to the Gods of Egypt as to men.”¹¹⁹ God gave complete authority and freedom to his people when he performed this act of mercy. Through this process of redemption he separated his people from the evil works of the devil. Thus if offenders would adhere and live according to the will of God there will be a sense of freedom for their lives. Edwards states that “and here it may be understood that the work of redemption is sometimes understood in a more limited sense, for the purchase of salvation; for so the word signifies, a purchase of deliverance; and if we take the word in this restrained sense, the work of redemption was not so long in doing.”¹²⁰ Redemption is essential for the deliverance of people from their sins therefore we can experience redemption through salvation. It is through this redemption process that we find freedom and deliverance to help us integrate back into society and function independently. In the Old Testament, Edwards wrote “and Christ, the seed of the woman, did not in a very remarkable manner, fulfill the curse on the serpent in bruising his head: For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night and will smite all the first born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast against all the gods of Egypt will I execute judgment.”¹²¹ As this concept of redemption

¹¹⁹ Jonathan Edwards, *The History of Redemption* (Ann Arbor, MI: Cushing-Malloy Inc., 1959), 70.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 17.

¹²¹ Ibid., 70.

is shared in this Old Testament passage, it is affirmation that Christ is holding those accountable for their sins however he will render judgment to those under these orders. There are many opinions of how we reconcile our differences to God and to man however, redemption is obviously an option to doing so. While we have been made free, it is still critical that we renew the right relationship with God. Carol Jergen and Michael Glazier wrote in *Restoring Our Friendship with God* that “In order to enable the human family to enjoy God’s friendship in any period of history, persons must be freed from the power of sin and be healed from its devastating effects.”¹²² To overcome these obstacles and barriers that will hinder us from effectively functioning in this society, we must be released from the power of sin and seek restoration to receive healing. The victims are often the ones who spend considerable amount of time in finding healing for their situation. This is natural because of the long-term effects that criminal acts may have caused to them emotionally, physically and mentally. Suffering is a key component to this which may last indefinitely or for a temporary period of time. Suffering can be endured by the survivor or many times it affects the family as an entire body. Jergen and Glazier further state that “Redemptive history is ongoing as the risen Jesus in union with his Christians continue to free the human family from suffering and sin.”¹²³ Redemptive history is something that has supported families in working to restore a relationship with Christ. It moves the family from dealing continuously in sin to finding support and love through Christ Jesus. “Once again, in this context of redemptive suffering we face the

¹²² Ibid., 87.

¹²³ Ibid.

question of God's image."¹²⁴ People often want to equate suffering as an act of God. There is often times blame by those who find it as an easy way out to blame God for the suffering in their lives. "God is not a god who sends suffering, contrary to what many sincere, devout people have been taught to believe."¹²⁵ Suffering can be attributed to the works of Satan as we are led into his evil works that often times we do not stray from and become victims in this realm. "God, as we know most clearly in Jesus, is concerned about freeing people from suffering, especially the suffering of sin."¹²⁶ As we develop a closer relationship with God, we know that his desire is for us to have a life that we are free from sin. Suffering as it has been stated here is a result of sin and God punishes those who live in sin. Offenders in the context of this writing can be free from sin if they work diligently at living in a redemptive lifestyle with Christ.

The famous track athlete, Marion Jones wrote in *On the Right Track* that "she knew that God could deliver her from her past."¹²⁷ Jones went through a redemptive life after spending considerable time in prison for the crime that she had committed. However, this stint with the criminal justice system did not have her blaming God for her mistakes. Jones went in with the attitude that "her past would not stop me from seeing God in my life."¹²⁸ Here is an example of how we should not blame God for our sin but seek redemption and work to get back closer with our Lord. Jones went on further to say that "I may have gone through some terrible things in my past, but I knew that the Lord

¹²⁴ Ibid., 90.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Marion Jones, *On the Right Track* (New York: Howard Book, Inc., 2010), 70.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

was willing to forgive me, reveal himself to me and give me another chance.”¹²⁹ A critical component of redemption is forgiveness and reconciliation. It is left to the individual person to find this time of reconciling their differences not as if they are regarded as some cold-blooded criminal. Jones felt that “all person made in the divine image of God who, like the rest of us, have distorted that image, made mistakes, and long for love, reconciliation, and purpose.”¹³⁰ It is then incumbent upon us as a society or faith community to make that connection and forgive them for their mistakes and help them as this project attempts to do and gain recovery and reintegration successfully back into the community. Our role is to find a solution or opportunity to assist those in this redemptive mode to know that God does not intend for them to stay in the shape that they are in. Jones realized in her own journey that “Psalm 139 also teaches me that I need to start looking at myself through the loving, transformative eyes of God, and that no matter what I do or where I go, I am never far from God’s comforting presence.”¹³¹ Essentially, Jones made it clear that it is how we view ourselves that is important and not necessarily the way others may look at us. Often times others look at us through lens that are shameful and doubtful of our redemption life but it is important that we find God and know that he can transform us.

As we focus on this redemption process, I believe in the Dietrich Bonhoeffer writing: “What is good and evil about which Christ ask us? The good is nothing other than that we ask for his grace and take hold of it.”¹³² God is willing to forgive us from the

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 79.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid., 218.

evil and sin that we have committed and if we are to find the good in our situation, we are open to seek his grace in all that we do. “The evil is nothing other than fear and waiting to stand before God on one’s own, wanting to be self-righteous.”¹³³ Selfishness is a factor in evil as we have an opportunity for repentance and getting ourselves back on track to do what is right and pleasing for the kingdom of God. We have a responsibility to turn this situation around as opposed to being self-righteous. “Repentance is a turning from one’s own work to the mercy of God.”¹³⁴ Many people have turned from their own evil deeds and actions to finding place and peace within the kingdom and allow the mercy of God to manifest itself within us. If we seek repentance and focus on the mercy of God then our situations will likely turn around in a manner that we can redeem ourselves from the hand of the devil. It is then through this process that we can begin to see people change their perspective and find ways to offer positive reinforcement in their lives. “And so the breathless struggle goes on, with God the victor and the person defeated; he no longer know where it will all lead to and he sees that he is lost; he does not know whether he hates or loves the one who has forced his way so violently into his life and destroyed his peace.”¹³⁵ This model of a faith based approach to addressing recidivism and finding solutions is no uncommon approach to the spiritual community. There are numerous effective programs that have had a collaborative approach to responding to the crisis.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 195.

The final parable asks us to face our inadequacies of understanding and awareness. “We cannot always know what is God’s will.”¹³⁶

Sometimes the interpretation of the Sheep and the Goats has been restricted to the question of how Christians have been helped or rejected. The little’s ones are identified as Christian missionaries arriving in some town or village. For two reasons that should be rejected: first, Matthew’s gospel has often reminded us that the little ones, the weak and the vulnerable, go before us into the kingdom. It is they, not the Christian missionaries, who have pride of place that the Last Judgment; second, the standards of judgment—feeding the naked, visiting the sick and caring for the imprisoned—suggest that to concentrate only on the missionaries would be far too narrow of an interpretation.

“I am free only when my existence depends on myself.”¹³⁷ “If the seat of conflict is viewed as being within man himself, where does responsibility for its solution lie? “First, responsibility for the solution of his conflict lies with the individual himself.”¹³⁸

“As feeling, *guilt* refers to the emotional aspect of an experience of one who stands in judgment upon himself, and condemns himself or at least acknowledges others’ condemnation of himself as deserved.”¹³⁹ “In the Pauline conception of redemption the Spirit of God permeates the entire body.”¹⁴⁰

“The doctrine of redemption was presented piecemeal to Christians in churches, Christians who did not yet know how their own continuing guilt, hostility, and anxiety

¹³⁶ Jones, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 155.

¹³⁷ Sherrill, *Guilt and Redemption*, 47.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 54.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 208.

could be put with utter confidence in the hands of the same God who had already begun to redeem them.”¹⁴¹

First he affirms that Christ’s Passion delivers us not only from Satan but also from God’s punishments. “By obtaining our forgiveness, Christ delivers us from Satan, and by offering a superabundant satisfaction, Christ dissolves our own debts to God.”¹⁴²

“In so far as redemption is part of God’s providence, it is process by which man is converted from sin and transformed into glory.”¹⁴³

The more one begins to consider the problem of justice, the more impossible and visionary any full justice appears to be. Only if the past can somehow be brought into the present and only if a sufficient flexibility of vision can allow radical diversities to co-exist in well-being, only then can justice in its fullest dimensions be established. Kelsey further states that “Christians use the word redemption and related words in relation to practices that make up their common life as Christians.”¹⁴⁴ Typically, we think that redemption is an easy way to satisfy our negative behavior however to seek redemption it should be taken seriously to free ourselves from the works of Satan. Many who seek and experience redemption consider this to be a different way of life. We have identified a change in our heart and soul to move further into forgiveness. “God sends suffering as part of the process of our redemption from spiritual and moral imperfection, and it is particularly through suffering that human souls are purified and made perfect.”¹⁴⁵ “In

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 217.

¹⁴² Aquinas and Bracken, *Why Suffering in Redemption*, 337.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 345.

¹⁴⁴ Kelsey, *Imagining Redemption*, 2.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. 51.

traditional accounts, God's redemptive relating makes a difference initially and chiefly in people's souls as opposed to their bodies."¹⁴⁶

In order to enable the human family to enjoy God's friendship in any period of history, persons must be freed from the power of sin and be healed from its devastating effects. "The victims are often the ones who spend considerable amount of time in finding healing for their situation."¹⁴⁷ Suffering can be attributed to the works of Satan as we are led into his evil works that often times we do not stray from and become victims in this realm. "God, as we know most clearly in Jesus, is concerned about freeing people from suffering, especially the suffering of sin."¹⁴⁸ As we develop a closer relationship with God, we know that his desire is for us to have a life that we are free from sin. Suffering as it has been stated here is a result of sin and God punishes those who live in sin. Offenders in the context of this writing can be free from sin if they work diligently at living in a redemptive lifestyle with Christ.

This assertion allows us to believe that upon the arrival of the Son of Man we have been given a sense of freedom. The Son of Man is the only one who has the power to grant us this freedom and allow us to experience redemptions. "In the Old Testament, redemption is a synonym for deliverance from slavery."¹⁴⁹ As we have discussed previously, people are redeemed from their sins and this belief is that they are liberated which means they are free as people have been freed from slavery. "And here it may be

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. 66.

¹⁴⁷ Carol Frances Jergen, *Restoring our Friendship with God: The Mystery of Redemption From Suffering and Sin* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc. 1989), 87.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 90.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 119.

understood that the work of redemption is sometimes understood in a more limited sense, for the purchase of salvation; for so the word signifies, a purchase of deliverance; and if we take the word in this restrained sense, the work of redemption was no so long in doing.”¹⁵⁰ Redemption is essential for the deliverance of people from their sins and therefore we can experience redemption through salvation. It is through this redemption process that we find freedom and deliverance to help us integrate back into society and function independently.

“In that redemption, Christ did not only redeem the people from the Egyptians, but he redeemed them from the devils, the gods of Egypt; for before, they had been in a state of servitude to the gods of Egypt as to as to men.”¹⁵¹ God gave complete authority and freedom to his people when he performed this act of mercy. Through this process of redemption he separated his people from the evil works of the devil. Thus if offenders would adhere and live according to the will of God there will be a sense of freedom for their lives.

As this concept of redemption is shared in this Old Testament passage, it is affirmation that Christ is holding those accountable for this sins however he will render judgment to those under these orders.

Justice determines blame and administers pain in a contest between the offender and the state directed by systematic rules; whereas for restorative justice, “Crime is a violation of people and relationships.”¹⁵² “Justice involves the victim, the offender and

¹⁵⁰ Edwards, *History of Redemption*, 17.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 70.

¹⁵² C.F. D. Module, *Forgiveness and Reconciliation* (Cambridge, England: The University Press, 1998), 46.

the community in a search for solutions that promote repair, reconciliation and reassurance.”¹⁵³ Our system of justice, he write is above all a system for making decisions about guilt. “Consequently it focuses on the past.”¹⁵⁴ “Biblical justice seeks first to solve problems, to find solutions, to make things right, looking towards the future.”¹⁵⁵

“What is good and evil about which Christ ask us?”¹⁵⁶ The good is nothing other than that we ask for his grace and take hold of it. God is willing to forgive us from the evil and sin that we have committed and if we are to find the good in our situation, we are open to seek his grace in all that we do. “The evil is nothing other than fear and waiting to stand before God on one’s own, wanting to be self-righteous.”¹⁵⁷ Selfishness is a factor in evil as we have an opportunity for repentance and getting ourselves back on track to do what is right and pleasing for the kingdom of God. We have a responsibility to turn this situation around as oppose to being self-righteous.

“Repentance is a turning from ones’ own work to the mercy of God.”¹⁵⁸ If we seek repentance and focus on the mercy of God then our situations will likely turn around in a manner that we can redeem ourselves from the hand of the devil. It is then through this process that we can began to see people change their perspective and find ways to offer positive reinforcement in their lives. “And so the breathless struggle goes on, with

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 218.

¹⁵⁷ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *A Testament to Freedom: The Essential Writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1995), 218.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

God the victor and the person defeated; he no longer knows where it will all lead to and he sees that he is lost; he does not know what he hates or loves the one who has forced his way so violently into his life and destroyed his peace.”¹⁵⁹

Theological Foundation

Benjamin E. Mays, in the book *Born to Rebel*, wrote: “There wasn’t much going for the Negro in the world in which I was born. The shades of darkness were falling fast upon him and around him. The tides of the post-Reconstruction years were being turned deliberately and viciously against him, the ballot was being taken away. Segregation was being enacted into law. Lynching was widespread and vigorously defended. Injustices in the court were taken for granted whenever a Negro was involved with a white man.”¹⁶⁰ As the author searches for meaning of this project, Mays’ assertion helps us to understand the necessity that we collaborate to provide supportive services for those who have been considered the underdog.

As we gain an understanding of theology, we are reminded of word *Ekklesia*, which author A.J. Conyers defined as “the Greek term used by New Testament writers ... to refer to gatherings of citizens called together for political or business purpose.”¹⁶¹ “The primary reason of Jesus’ coming into the world was to bring good news to the afflicted and the sinned against.”¹⁶² We can gather our collective thoughts and work as laborers to

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 195.

¹⁶⁰ Benjamin E. Mays, *Born to Rebel* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1971), 22.

¹⁶¹ A.J. Conyers, *A Basic Christian Theology* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1995), 139.

¹⁶² Andrew Sung Park, *The Other Side of Sin* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press), 53.

seek transformation for those who have been considered the “least of these.” As we visit the theological perspective for understanding our role in reentry, we must be aware that this should be our passion: to help those who have fallen into temptation realize that there is still good news that can provide redemption. In the book *Cast Down Your Nets* the authors David Mosser and Brian Bauknight said “John is passionately convinced that Jesus came into the world to reconcile everyone to God.”¹⁶³ In other words, God is focused on reconciliation, regardless of the offense committed.

“The Bible is about real people, written by real men and women to persons trying to live on the earth together.”¹⁶⁴ It is important that, as we understand the doctrine of the Holy Writ, we seek to interpret its understanding to the daily application of our lives. Thus, as we examine the importance of reaching out to this challenging population, we cannot ignore what the Word of God instructs us in times such as these.

“Because of the theme of liberation and freedom, the Exodus narratives are central to the African-American Church.”¹⁶⁵ “The basis of these disciplines is the doctrine of the church, that is, the interpretation of the nature and the purpose of the church, what the church and its members are called to be and to do.”¹⁶⁶ It is dually our responsibility to take this message and provide hope and love to a society that is desperately in need of its direction.

¹⁶³ David Mosser and Brian Bauknight, *Cast Down Your Nets* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003) 84.

¹⁶⁴ Richard L. Enslinger, *A New Hearing: Living Options in Homiletic Methods* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987), 19.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Owen Thomas and Ellen Wondra, *Introduction to Theology* (New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2002), 257.

Judith Craig, in *The Leading Women*, said “social life was family and church.”¹⁶⁷

We cannot overlook the essence and purpose of what social life meant to its people.

Walter Bruggeman, in *Biblical Perspectives on Evangelism*, said “Psalm 78 provided the best case known to me in the Bible for evangelism of own young.”¹⁶⁸

Reaching the young during this critical time in their lives is essential as we help to guide them to making good choices. “The community is enjoined to tell its young the glorious deeds of Yaweh, to let them know that our lives are grounded in miracles. James Efird, in *How to Interpret the Bible*, felt that these stories and teaching were obviously treasured by members of the early Christian community and were used to speak to the needs of that community.”¹⁶⁹

Evangelism is a tool that is vital to saving this generation of individuals who have been lost in our criminal justice system through careless and foolish mistakes. James Stalling, in *Telling the Story: Evangelism in Black Churches*, said “the existence of the invisible institution permitted Afro-Americans to reject the religion of the masters and interpret the faith in a manner that suited their needs.”¹⁷⁰ Bill Hull, in *Can we Save the Evangelical Church*, suggests that “when an entrepreneurial leader develops a flagship

¹⁶⁷ Judith Craig, *The Leading Women* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004), 57.

¹⁶⁸ Walter Bruggeman, *Biblical Perspectives on Evangelism: Living in a Three Storied Universe* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 120.

¹⁶⁹ James Efird, *How to Interpret the Bible* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1984), 62.

¹⁷⁰ James O. Stallings, *Telling the Story: Evangelism in Black Churches* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1988), 53.

church, the local church model is at its best.”¹⁷¹ “A flagship church is designed to embody the principles and reproduce itself many times over.”¹⁷²

Kirbyjohn Caldwell and Walk Kallestad, authors of *Entrepreneurial Faith*, contend that “spiritual entrepreneurs are people who see what God wants them to see, believe in what they see, and do it.”¹⁷³ This concept is innovative in nature, in that our collaboration could begin teaching social entrepreneurship to these ex-offenders so that they develop opportunities for self-sufficiency. Using this unique concept will enable them to become diverse in finding and securing resources and employment for sustainability.

For example, in the book *Adam! Where are You?*, it is noted that liberation churches have a male population that exceeds 20-25 percent. “They have ministries for males and have study sessions where these 21 reasons and more have been discussed.”¹⁷⁴ “Our greatest challenge is to find solutions to solve these daily problems for survival.”¹⁷⁵ Reinhold Niebuhr said that “the inclination of modern man to find the source of evil in his life in some particular event in history or some specific historical corruption is a natural consequence of his view of himself in a simple one-dimensional history.”¹⁷⁶

¹⁷¹ Bill Hull, *Can We Save The Evangelical Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming Revel Publishing, 1993), 42.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Kirbyjohn Caldwell and Walt Kallestad, *Entrepreneurial Faith: Launching Bold Initiatives to Expand God's Kingdom* (Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press, 2004), 139.

¹⁷⁴ Jawanza Kunjufu, *Adam! Where are You? Why Most Black Men Don't Go to Church* (USA: 1994), 115.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons Publishing Company, 1941), 96.

William Scott and William Shade wrote in *Upon these Shores* that “conservatives blame rising crime and dependency rates in the inner city on morally injurious federal and state welfare policies and on the coddling of criminals.”¹⁷⁷ The faith collaborative approach is critical in finding solutions to the challenges that most of the ex-offenders are experiencing. Using a legislative change in the agenda could afford easier opportunities for accessibility. The idea behind the community-based care approach is to create community partnerships that address the unique challenges of each community.

Discovering the presence and purpose of the black church is vital to the essence of this author’s project. In the African American community, there is continuing need to address the theological perspective of assisting the oppressed. Thabiti M. Anyabwile wrote: “The African American abolitionists of the nineteenth century fought valiantly for a view of man that recognized the spiritual equality of all people and the freedom from bondage that such equality demanded.”¹⁷⁸ He further contends that “in one sense, “decline” is not the best word to describe African American views of man.”¹⁷⁹ The author will examine this entire issue further as we examine the critical need for a collaborative method for the faith community to support successful reentry in our community. There is a lack of ministries that address the social component of the church, and therefore people often lack the support they need to survive. A critical relationship exists between churches’ religious obligations and their social obligations.

¹⁷⁷ William R. Scott, *Upon these Shores: Themes in the African-American Experience, 1600 to the present* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 343.

¹⁷⁸ Thabiti Anyabwile, *The Decline of American Theology: From Biblical Faith to Cultural Captivity* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1984), 133.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. 132.

Dale Andrews, in *Practical Theology for Black Churches*, provides insight as to “how churches must reach beyond their walls and provide social networking for the support of the people.”¹⁸⁰ Tim Conder wrote in *The Church in Transition* that “we must begin to think of missions as the posture of persons seeking to perpetually participate in God’s work.”¹⁸¹ Black theology must press beyond its conclusive indictment of black church practices and examine the conditions contributing to any hindrance or distortion of the church’s mission. Parishioners cannot overlook the need for extending their hearts and souls into the transformation of those who have struggled for human dignity.

Rufus Burrow, in *James H. Cone and Black Liberation Theology*, asserts that “where the black community and the struggle for liberation are concerned, the first act of theology is direct involvement and commitment to the liberation of blacks from all forms of oppression.”¹⁸² Cone further argued that the “black church of the post-bellum period strayed from its prophetic heritage.”¹⁸³ “Though once a mechanism for protest and agitation against racial oppression, the black church now accepts things as they were.”¹⁸⁴ This complacent position did not force the church to address the social ills that confronted it. Blacks were in need, perhaps, of a liberation movement to combat these issues. “The liberation of blacks was no longer a priority.”¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁰ Dale P. Andrews, *Practical Theology for Black Churches* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 50.

¹⁸¹ Tim Conder, *The Church in Transition: The Journey of Existing Churches into the Emerging Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 168.

¹⁸² Rufus Burrow, Jr., *James H. Cone and Black Liberation Theology* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc, 1994), 27.

¹⁸³ Ibid, 153.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

Even though Emmanuel Marty took this position, the author feels that to overcome the history of oppression, something must be done to respond to the reluctance. It is left to the church to focus on a liberation movement and to care for the societal needs of its people. Marty, in *African Theology*, said: “For those coming from the underside of history, theology has always been a struggle, a struggle against all enslaving and dehumanizing forces.”¹⁸⁶ This struggle continues in modern times as we reach out to this challenging population experiencing reclamation into society. “Therefore, as ‘a movement of liberation’ struggling against oppressive and exploitative forces from outside and within the African continent, the African revolution placed a ‘theological compulsion’ upon African Christians and especially the church, which, in the eyes of mission-trained nationalists, was an instrument of imperialist oppression.”¹⁸⁷

James Cone believes that “the development of black theology is an attempt by the black community to define what the knowledge of God means in a white, racist society.”¹⁸⁸ In *Models of Black Theology*, Julian Kunnie says the “Black Church is the historical home of the impoverished and that it must continue to be the place of refuge for such persons every day of the week, not just on Sundays.”¹⁸⁹

Some ex-offenders believe the church has failed to help them gain the resources they need. Many of these individuals look to the church for assistance as they reenter

¹⁸⁶ Emmanuel Marty, *African Theology: Inculturation and Liberation* (New York: Orbis Books, 1993), 7.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, 8.

¹⁸⁸ James H. Cone, *Liberation: A Black Theology of Liberation* (Philadelphia, PA: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1970), 85.

¹⁸⁹ Julian Kunnie, *Models of Black Theology: Issues in Class, Culture and Gender* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1994), 54.

society. David D. Mitchell wrote in *Black Theology and Youth at Risk* that “the message of Christ as revealed in the historic Jesus is not only a message of hope for the oppressed, but that it is also a mandate for a revolutionary movement of liberation for the Christian Church.”¹⁹⁰

Are the churches being morally responsible for carrying out the mission of working to support the needs of the “least of these?” James Cone in *Black Theology and Black Power* said that “the mission of the church is to announce and to act out the gospel it has received.”¹⁹¹ When we look at the role of the church, this population of incarcerated individuals should not be overlooked because of their crimes and subsequent punishment. Michael Sullivant, in *Your Kingdom Come*, stated “that throughout the centuries, the mission of the church, those called out of the world system of sin and rebellion, has been to persuade as many people as possible concerning the good news of Jesus and his rightful claim.”¹⁹² Harry Singleton, III said in his book, *Black Theology and Ideology*, that the “relationship of black theology to Christian theology is difficult to articulate, given that black theology is rooted in the particularity of black existence in white American, whereas Christian theology has historically been treated as universal phenomenon.”¹⁹³

¹⁹⁰ David Mitchell, *Black Theology and Youths at Risk* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2001), 1.

¹⁹¹ James H. Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997), 83.

¹⁹² Michael Sullivant, *Your Kingdom Come* (Lake Mary, FL: Creation House, 2000), 120.

¹⁹³ Harry H. Singleton, III, *Black Theology and Ideology* (Collegeville, MI: The Liturgical Press, 1989), 62.

Many of the persons who have been labeled as oppressed or victims of circumstance are in need of the church to help them regain self-sufficiency, but they obviously feel that the role of the church has been neglected. Slaves did not believe that Christianity could bring them freedom and equality. “For African slaves, religion could not be separated from the way in which the world was structured, and their beliefs always related closely to the behavior in that world.”¹⁹⁴ This means that, for Cone, “black slaves made an eschatological decision for black liberation with the “intuitive” knowledge that Jesus Christ had not willed their eternal bondage.”¹⁹⁵ “Theologically, this means that black people are prepared to live according to God’s eschatological future as defined by the reality of Christ’s presence in the social existence of oppressed people struggling for historical liberations.”¹⁹⁶ The challenges that confront black people, particularly in the criminal justice system, were equally devastating as they struggled for freedom.

William Jones in his book, *Is God a White Racist?*, said that “despite the prevailing view to the contrary, not all blacks during slavery and Reconstruction were convinced that God is righteous, just, and loving.”¹⁹⁷ The view was difficult to accept since many blacks were mistreated and had a challenging road ahead of them. James Cone and Gayraud Wilmore contend that “if Black Theology today is failing to reach our pastors and congregations, it may well be because it has ceased to harmonize the radical message of Black liberation with the more conservative message of the healing and self

¹⁹⁴ James H. Evans, Jr., *We Have Been Believers* (Minneapolis, MI: The Fortress Press, 1992), 21.

¹⁹⁵ James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (New York: Orbis Books, 1975), 195.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ William R. Jones, *Is God a White Racist?* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), 24.

fulfillment through a saving faith in Jesus Christ.”¹⁹⁸ This message needs to reach throughout so that these people may reach a level of consciousness and feel a sense of achievement through black liberation. Many feel they have failed in their attempt to survive, but perhaps through a message of hope their purpose will be renewed.

“The message of Isaiah, as declared by God’s covenant and prophets, was initially one of judgment, due to the sinful reliance of the people upon foreign powers outside the will of God.”¹⁹⁹ “Deep, intimate fellowship with the Holy Spirit involves an admission of human weakness, the relinquishment of our illusions of being in control, and an embracing of the mysterious and the intuitive.”²⁰⁰ In the book *A History of Prophecy in Israel*, the author, Joseph Blenkinsopp said: “Given the dismal record of optimistic prophets in the last years of the monarchy, it would be surprising if the prophet’s proclamation of good news had not been greeted with skepticism.”²⁰¹

Calvin Mackie, in *A View From the Roof*, summed it up when he said: “Prepare for the rain because the sun won’t shine forever.”²⁰²

¹⁹⁸ James Cone and Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Theology* (New York: Orbis Books, 1998), 119.

¹⁹⁹ Frank A. Thomas, *They Like to Never Quit Praisin’ God* (Cleveland, Ohio: The Cleveland Press, 1997), 21.

²⁰⁰ Brad Braxton, *Preaching Paul* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004), 86.

²⁰¹ Joseph Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel: From the Settlement in the Land to the Hellenistic Period* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1983), 212.

²⁰² Calvin Mackie, *A View From the Roof* (Boston: Acanthus Publishers, 2005), 117.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

The writer believes that one of the major issues with returning citizens is reentry and the barrier of securing adequate and sufficient housing. Reentry is the process of reintegrating ex-offenders back into the community. This process takes place after release from jail or prison and includes a progression that, ideally, prepares an offender for successful reintegration by providing the necessary skills and tools.

This hypothesis is based on a collaborative model to engage the local faith institutions in responding to the call of addressing the issues that returning citizens face and how we can help solve this problem to eliminate lack of adequate housing for this population. The writer is challenging the members of the faith community to work collaboratively in establishing facilities to respond to this need. It was crucial to raise awareness of the needs of ex-offenders and engage members of the faith community in addressing these needs.

The writer's goal was to establish a cadre of faith-based organizations, such as prison ministries, churches, synagogues, prison fellowships, etc., to discuss and reflect on the crisis that many of these individuals are facing. The writer believed that it was important for us to support the scripture that Jesus was centered on when Jesus said: "What you have done to the least of these you have done it to me." The writer assembled several focus groups to look at where we were currently in addressing this issue and how

we could brainstorm opportunities for services in a collaborative model. A vast amount of research has addressed successful reentry.

“The Bureau of Prisons believe that offender reentry can be achieved more successfully and efficiently if the following components are implemented:

- Identification of the core skills needed for successful offender reentry
- An objective assessment of those skills and continual measurement of the skills acquisition, rather than simple program completion
- Linkage of programs to specific reentry skills
- Allocation of resources to those inmates with the greatest skill deficiencies and hence, the greatest risk of recidivism; and
- Information sharing and the building of community collaborations for a holistic approach to transitioning offenders.”¹

The sessions began with personal stories and journeys shared by returning citizens who undoubtedly experienced obstacles once they departed the criminal justice system. The writer believed that once the leaders had an opportunity to share their best practices or just how they were responding to the issue that others would rise to the occasion and look at opportunities for collaboration.

Intervention

The context of this ministry project is with Antioch Builds Community, non profit organization of Antioch Baptist Church designed to improve the quality of life for its citizens. There is also support from a host of other faith institutions in the surrounding

¹ DonaLee Breazzano, December 2009 Corrections Today: The Federal Bureau of Prisons Shifts Reentry Focus to a Skills-Based Model p. 51.

community that desired to create a partnership and work together on these issues. The writer's focus was to raise awareness of this problem and for interest to be generated in assisting in this mission effort.

It has been determined that the three major areas in combating recidivism is housing, employment, and mental health services. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, more than 700,000 people leave U.S. state and federal prisons each year.¹ If there is no answer to addressing their needs, then the likelihood that many will return to the criminal justice system is extremely high. The majority of the returning citizens come back into the community without family or resources and facing barriers to employment. Many become homeless, transient and unable to gain status within the community. This causes some of these individuals to resort to crime to meet their daily needs. The writer offers an opportunity for the faith community to come together to craft solutions to respond to the crisis. Because of the magnitude of this problem, it is critical that we develop partnerships to address these concerns.

This partnership can be successful only if congregations and members of the faith institutions reach outside their walls with total support and confidence that they can be a part of the solution. There are numerous issues that must be addressed before engaging in this type of ministry of collaboration. First, pastoral leadership must commit totally to supporting this ministry through outreach, mission, and service. In an effort to properly engage the congregation, we must understand the plight of many of the participants of the program. It is critical that we seek to eliminate fear and apprehension about serving such a challenging population and leave behind those myths and issues that can place a wall between us and the participant. The "returning citizen" already feels criminalized.

Therefore, our attitude must come from a vantage point of forgiveness. Pastors and spiritual leaders can set the tone by engaging their congregations in discussions of forgiveness and understanding.

Second, congregations must embrace the Great Commission that we are to go out into the highways, wilderness, and villages to seek the lost and work as a kingdom to rebuild the lives and souls of those involved. Partnerships exist because each entity can bring different spiritual gifts that will enhance the wellbeing of these returning citizens. One of the successful models that is currently in place at Antioch Baptist Church is the use of faith teams. Faith teams have been used successfully to build a community-based network of human service to assist ex-offenders. Collaboration with other organizations has proven to be beneficial as we recognize the strength in greater numbers. It is also a great opportunity for the returning citizens to see people of varying faiths coming together for a common cause.

Third, establishing a transitional ministry requires communal resources. It does not place the entire burden on one group but allows several organizations and ministries to come together with support. Many of the congregations are small, so collaboration would allow our services to extend beyond our individual capacities. This project could be greatly enhanced if we had the support of many groups who share the same mission. During our focus groups, pastors expressed the desire to address the problem and how we could pool our resources to build this type of transitional ministry. Collectively, we could find solutions and create additional partnerships to seek support for this ministry.

The writer assembled two focus groups: One hosted two returning citizens who talked about the specific needs ex-offenders have and the obstacles they face upon

reentry to society. The first group consisted of pastors, lay leaders from various faith groups, and governmental program leaders from local municipalities. Each of the members of the focus group were either directly involved with this population or had expressed some interest in collaborating on a similar project.

The second focus group consisted mainly of pastors from the community who had been targeted for the transitional ministry. Various denominations were represented, including Baptist, Methodist, and Catholic. The majority of the representation came from churches with congregations that numbered fewer than 200 people. The agencies were represented by department heads who were in positions of authority and involved in decision-making.

The participants engaged in discussion with the returning citizens and were passionate about seeking to create solutions to help eradicate this problem. After the writer introduced each speaker, the focus groups' participants had an opportunity to ask questions. Many of those questions centered on how the faith community might engage ex-offenders. The writer distributed a pre-assessment questionnaire and requested that each participant complete the form prior to the discussion. After the discussion, participants opened up their hearts and minds to dialogue on finding solutions to respond to this growing problem.

Research Design

The methodology of a Sequential Transformative model was used with the participants to show the use of collaboration in this project. This model according to John W. Creswell “ the purpose of a sequential transformative strategy is to employ the

methods that will best serve the theoretical perspective of the researcher.”² This model will allow the researcher to capture the essence of the participant’s discussion. Creswell suggest that “by using two phases, a sequential transformative researcher may be able to give voice to diverse perspectives, to better advocate for participants, or to understand a phenomenon or process that is changing as a result of being studied.” Therefore with the data collected for this project, the researcher will be able to provide insight to the attitudes and beliefs of the leadership of the various faith communities in coming together to work on a common solution.

It is believed that with this model that the participants will be able to discover that their opinions and beliefs of serving this challenging population can become a reality. The various faith organizations after discovering its potential for collaboration can make a difference in providing supporting resources to build opportunities to address the lack of support that returning citizens have available. The researcher found that engaging the participants in a conversation allowed the opportunity to realize the many perspectives that each of them brings to making this project a reality.

Establishing this collaborative model will gain momentum in other communities as we examine how very few governmental and social agencies are unable and or not willing to provide the support these citizens are in need of for reentry. This model can be successful and critical for the faith community in assisting those returning citizens who are unable to find other resources. The researcher finds this design vital for success because it motivates the faith community to support the gospel of Jesus Christ and our role for involvement in this ministry. We can find ourselves making a difference in the

² John W. Creswell, *Research Design*(Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 2003),16.

lives of the unfortunate if we involve ourselves with our neighboring church in creating partnership(s) to address the issues of homelessness, poverty and recidivism. The faith community will undoubtedly be fulfilling the mission of the kingdom and working on behalf of the total population to make lives richer and better to become productive citizens. This model of ministry should also engage us in being a welcoming community to those who come to our doorsteps and are in need of assistance.

The researcher allowed the participants to share their attitudes and beliefs in a roundtable discussion to gain respect and understanding for the project. Participants were engaging and honest in their apprehension and fears for being reluctant in creating partnership to address this problem or reentry.

Instrumentation

Four instruments were used to test the hypothesis of this research project. The writer used oral presentation from actual people who had been through criminal justice system, observation and focus groups were used as the qualitative instruments and pre- and post-test were the quantitative instruments.

The first qualitative instrument was a presentation by two returning citizens who shared their journey since exiting the criminal justice system. There were two focus groups and two different presenters at each session. Each of the presenters had been away from the system for a minimum of eight to twelve months. This presentation allowed the participants to understand the plight that these individuals commonly faced upon reentry. It allowed the participants to understand the attitudes, obstacles and challenges that are met by those seeking employment, housing etc. The participants were given an

opportunity to ask questions when they had completed their presentation and each group posed the same questions. The questions will be shared later in this chapter.

The second qualitative instrument that was used was observation. The researcher observed the interactions, attitudes and discussions of the participants as each presenter demonstrated. The participants seem to grasp an understanding of how severe this issue was and began searching for ways that they could be involved. One way correctional departments can improve public safety while dealing with tight budgets is to form partnerships with community and faith-based groups. The participant also conducted a reentry summit/conference to engage members of the faith community to hear about the various ways that they could be involved in combating this problem and seeking the support of community resources and agencies.

The researcher used focus groups as the third qualitative instrument. Focus groups are used as mechanisms to gather information informally from various constituents. The focus groups were used to engage in a constructive dialogue on how collaborating partners could become efficient in developing a model that would address the community need.

Pre- and post-test were the quantitative instruments used. These test were used to evaluate the participants' attitudinal changes of establishing a model transitional reentry program. The participants were measured on whether they were still favorable or unfavorable to reaching out to assist these individuals with the barriers they continued to face.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE

The hypothesis of this ministry project is to create awareness among the various groups of faith in the Durham, NC, community around the need to create a faith-based network to aid ex-offenders, or returning citizens, as they seek employment and housing. The researcher established a coalition of pastors, lay leaders, and community activists to discuss the need for helping the “least of these.” The majority of the participants were members of the NorthEast Central Durham Community. The NorthEast Central Durham Community is comprised of a ninety-six-block area of eastern Durham that has a rich history of revitalizing the community, which has endured years of poverty, homelessness, and other social ills.

The researcher is founder of the Antioch Builds Community and is pastor of Antioch Baptist Church. He has developed a ministry that seeks to address the needs of this underserved community. One of its primary needs concerns assistance for returning citizens who are unable to attain housing, employment, and other supportive services.

The researcher knew from the onset that bringing this group together to discuss this sensitive topic would be challenging. Because of apprehension and fear, churches and faith-based groups in the past have overlooked the needs of this community. To prepare for this undertaking, the researcher met individually with community leaders to seek their opinions and participation. Some expressed concern for their safety. Others

said it would be challenging to connect this population of ex-offenders to members of their congregations. However, each representative agreed to participate in a focus group that would include former inmates.

The attitudes of the participants ranged from a lack of concern to desiring to know the nature of the crimes that these returning citizens had committed. It was obvious that some participants questioned whether the ex-offenders had been rehabilitated. The participants were receptive to the passion of the researcher and agreed to seek solutions to the problem. In the end, each acknowledged that he or she should be open to working collaboratively with other places of worship in the community to solve community concerns and bring relief to this growing epidemic.

The researcher's priority was to form a faith-based coalition that would establish a transitional ministry to support housing and supportive services for ex-offenders. The researcher believed, based on his own ministry, that if numerous groups worked together they could enhance the level of services for returning citizens. The expectation was that this collaborative would become a model for other communities. The researcher also wanted to eliminate the fears and concerns that many congregations have about this population. Therefore, the following objectives were established by the researcher for this project:

- A) Provide a welcoming environment for returning citizens, one that would provide them a second chance in the community.
- B) Engage local pastors, congregations, and other leaders in establishing a place where the ex-offenders could see that there were people of faith who believed in them and desire to see them have another opportunity at life.

- C) Provide suggestive ways that participants could open their hearts and doors to provide resources and love to a failing community.
- D) Help local pastors, congregations, and other leaders share their differences, expectations and apprehensions about engaging in a prison ministry where there may exist many concerns among members of their respective congregations.

The model chosen for this project was a qualitative and quantitative research design model to test the hypothesis of this project. Antioch Baptist Church was the meeting site for the focus groups sessions.

Implementation

Focus Groups

The researcher held two focus groups and a summit to address the issues of reentry and its obstacles for the returning citizens in our community. The community of faith is sorely needed to assist in rehabilitation and recovery and can offer, through partnerships and collaboration, enhanced services to this population. The focus groups' participants were enthusiastic about attending and seeking solutions as the dialogue continued. Some said they had come to realize the necessity of addressing such issues. The sessions were held at Antioch Baptist Church Fellowship, the context for this project. The sessions were held during the lunchtime hour, a time when participants were most available.

Participants in the focus groups were open to discussing their current involvement with this population and how they have handled any unique situations in bringing them in with congregations. Oftentimes, people experience fear when they learn that a neighbor

has spent time in prison. During the first session, the researcher administered a pre-test to gauge the attitudes and beliefs of participants. At the end of the session, when all discussions were concluded, a post-test was administered.

The researcher also hosted a reentry summit with a majority of the participants being able to attend. However, this was held to engage participants in opportunities for partnership. The researcher invited community agencies that were engaged in the reentry process and could utilize the assistance of faith partners to move their program forward. The summit also brought in returning citizens who shared stories of how they encountered obstacles in gaining reentry to the community. The summit was organized in the form of a panel discussion, and participants were eager to questions the invited panelists. The summit was host to a number of local churches, with participants also representing a federal correctional agency, the state attorney general's office, local government, lay leaders, pastors, and community members.

Initial Session

The initial session began with participants sharing lunch with one other and with the returning citizens. Everyone appeared to be comfortable, and no one showed visible signs of uneasiness. After an initial discussion, the researcher explained to the group how we would spend the next hour. The researcher explained the desired outcomes, his reasons for forming a collective, and his openness to input as the focus group moved forward. The researcher then distributed the pre-test survey and allowed up to fifteen minutes for each participant to complete it. The survey contained questions to measure attitudes and perceptions, but it also sought input on ways that the community of faith

could exercise its power to support prisoner reentry. This process would enable the researcher to learn more about the community's feelings in these subject areas. The researcher would share the results of the pre- and post-test with participants. This process would allow the researcher to understand the community's perception toward engaging partnerships.

Pre-test Responses

The focus group consisted of two groups. The first had seven participants—four women and three men. The returning citizens were also in attendance as presenters. The group diversity of the group was as follows:

- 1) There were four women and three men.
- 2) The members of the group were representatives from the host church, community agencies, and community leaders.
- 3) All members of the group were employed in the community.
- 4) All members of the group were between forty and sixty years of age.
- 5) There were four African Americans and three Caucasians

The researcher gave the participants a series of twelve questions, and the participants were asked to answer the questions by indicating one of five answers: "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Neutral," "Disagree," and "Strongly Disagree."

The second group consisted of eleven individuals who were considered to be pastoral leadership for establishing the partnership. Two returning citizens also were present to address the group. The demographics of the second group were as follows:

1. There were six men and five women.

2. The racial makeup was African American and Caucasian.
3. Members of the group were all pastors, associate ministers, and leaders of prison ministries of local congregations.
4. Eight members of the group were married, two was single, and one was divorced.
5. Members of the group were all college graduates, and two held post-graduate degrees.
6. Group members fell into the following age ranges: 25-35 (1), 35-45 (3) and 45-60 (7).

The pre-test results were as follows:

Statement I: Returning citizens deserve a second chance.

Strongly Agree-----100%

Agree-----0%

Neutral-----0%

Disagree-----0%

Strongly Disagree-----0%

Statement II: I believe that the church/faith-based community should do more for returning citizens.

Adequate -----0%

Not Enough-----90%

More than Enough-----0%

Sufficient-----10%

Statement III: I am supportive of providing services through my community of faith for returning citizens.

Strongly Agree-----100%

Agree-----0%

Neutral-----0%

Disagree-----0%

Strongly Agree-----0%

Statement IV: Communities of faith should develop partnership(s) that will address the needs of returning citizens.

Strongly Agree-----100%

Agree-----0%

Neutral -----0%

Strongly Agree-----0%

Statement V: Communities of faith should be reluctant about rapidly moving toward establishing support networks for returning citizens

Strongly Agree-----0%

Agree-----0%

Neutral -----0%

Disagree-----40%

Strongly Disagree-----60%

Statement VI: Communities of faith have a responsibility to help provide housing, employment and supportive networks for returning citizens.

Strongly Agree-----70%

Agree-----20%

Neutral -----10%

Disagree-----0%

Strongly Disagree-----0%

Statement VII.

Returning citizens should not be mixed with regular parishioners during worship services.

Strongly Agree-----0%
 Agree-----10%
 Neutral-----0%
 Disagree-----90%

Statement VIII: When returning citizens join our parish, they should reveal the nature/background of their crime.

Strongly Agree-----20%
 Agree-----20%
 Neutral-----10%
 Disagree-----30%
 Strongly Disagree-----20%

Statement IX: I find it difficult to respect returning citizens.

Strongly Agree-----0%
 Agree-----0%
 Neutral-----0%
 Disagree-----10%
 Strongly Disagree-----90%

Statement X: Returning citizens will eventually get in trouble again.

Strongly Agree-----0%
 Agree-----0%

Neutral-----10%

Disagree-----80%

Strongly Disagree-----10%

Statement XI: Communities of Faith should create partnerships to assist with returning citizens becoming self-sufficient.

Strongly Agree-----80%

Agree-----10%

Neutral-----0%

Disagree-----0%

Strongly Disagree-----10%

Statement XII: Communities of Faith do not have the resources or expertise to provide supportive services for returning citizens.

Strongly Agree-----0%

Agree-----0%

Neutral -----0%

Disagree-----80%

Strongly Disagree-----20%

Educational Review

The researcher presented two returning citizens who gave oral descriptions of their journeys and how challenging it had been for them to maneuver through a difficult and complex system. Each participant talked about his or her mistakes and the experience of coming out of the criminal justice system. They were asked specific questions by the

researcher about their educational backgrounds, work experiences, ages, and what led to their first encounter with the legal system. The researcher also asked them about when they came to faith, were they currently involved with a church, what supportive networks did they have in place, and what were the obstacles they encountered in attempting to gain services. Both ex-offenders had significant interaction with Antioch Baptist Church, therefore they were comfortable in their presentations and not intimidated by the level of the focus group.

After the researcher had completed his interview, he expanded the discussion so that focus group participants could questions the returning citizens about their journeys. The group wanted to understand the choices the ex-offenders had made: Had they been through a period of reconciliation? Did they believe that they had experienced a transformation? The ex-offenders were candid in their responses. Their biggest obstacles, they said, was finding employment and housing. They did not want to become homeless again and desired employment that would assist them in gaining self-sufficiency.

The focus group appeared to be compassionate and wanted to immediately do something as a group to address the former inmates' concerns. The group held a conversation among themselves during lunch about how they could work together to respond to this growing epidemic. Some of the participants were from small faith communities, and they recognized that it would be advantageous for them to collaborate on such efforts. Members of the group acknowledged numerous times that they had been unaware of the challenges that returning citizens face as they seek to reenter society with limited resources.

The Post-Test results were as follows:

Statement I: Returning citizens deserve a second chance.

Strongly Agree-----100%

Agree-----0%

Disagree-----0%

Strongly Disagree-----0%

Survey respondents were unanimous in their belief that returning citizens deserve a second chance. The researcher believes that, because of the conversations held during the focus group, participants were inclined to believe that reconciliation and forgiveness were important to the community of faith. While some were reluctant to keep dealing with the same behavior, they did feel that this was an opportunity to realize that we all make mistakes and should not be held down because of it.

Statement II: I believe that the church/faitth-based community should do more for returning citizens.

Adequate-----0%

Not Enough-----90%

N/A-----10%

More than Enough-----0%

Sufficient-----0%

A majority of respondents expressed concern that the doors of the church had not been opened enough to support returning citizens. There was consensus that the community of faith could offer much more if we pooled our resources. Some communities of faith have prison ministries but do not support re-entry. The respondents often asked the returning citizens to suggest ways that faith-based groups could be more

supportive. It appeared that there was a lack of knowledge in understanding how faith communities could be involved. Only one respondent said enough was being done already.

Statement III: I am supportive of providing services through my community of faith for returning citizens.

Strongly Agree-----100%

Agree-----0%

Neutral -----0%

Disagree-----0%

Strongly Disagree-----0%

There was no change in the pre- and post-test results for this question. The researcher believed that all focus group members would leave seeking ways to provide additional services to the target community.

Statement IV: Communities of faith should develop partnership(s) that will address the needs of returning citizens.

Strongly Agree-----100%

Agree-----0%

Neutral -----0%

Disagree-----0%

Strongly Disagree-----0%

There was no change to this question, as respondents were already eager to seek ways to create partnerships that would address the needs of the returning citizens. It was especially noted that each person at the table offered different gifts, and that we could

build from these opportunities to engage others members of the faith community to address specific concerns.

Statement V: Communities of faith should be reluctant about rapidly moving toward establishing support networks for returning citizens.

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| Strongly Agree----- | 0% |
| Agree----- | 0% |
| Neutral ----- | 0% |
| Disagree----- | 10% |
| Strongly Disagree----- | 90% |

Respondents showed a major shift in opinion after hearing firsthand accounts of the ex-offenders. In the post-test results, a far greater percentage disagreed with this statement.

Statement VI: Communities of faith have a responsibility to help provide housing, employment and supportive networks for returning citizens.

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| Strongly Agree----- | 80% |
| Agree----- | 20% |
| Neutral----- | 0% |
| Disagree----- | 0% |
| Strongly Disagree----- | 0% |

There was only a slight change in the respondents' opinion. However, discussion centered on understanding the theme scripture for this document, that if we are to honor Christ we must find resources to assist the "least of these."

Statement VII: Returning citizens should not be mixed with regular parishioners during worship.

Strongly agree-----10%

Agree-----0%

Neutral-----0%

Disagree-----10%

Strongly Disagree-----80%

The opinion of the respondents change slightly here, as there was overwhelmingly consensus that returning citizens should not be treated differently than other parishioners. The group concluded that it was important to transitioned them back into the congregation and that they be treated like other members.

Statement VIII: When returning citizens joined our parish, they should reveal the nature/background of their crime.

Strongly Agree-----0%

Agree-----60%

Neutral -----10%

Disagree -----20%

Strongly Disagree-----10%

This questions provided the most even responses, as there were mixed opinions concerning whether the revelation of past crimes was important to parishioners. Respondents said congregants would treat ex-offenders differently based on the crimes they committed. However, after looking at this issue from all sides, a majority said that, for safety reasons, it would be wise for congregations to have such information.

Statement IX: I find it difficult to respect returning citizens.

Strongly Agree-----0%

Agree-----0%

Neutral -----0%

Disagree -----10%

Strongly Disagree-----90%

There was no change in the way respondents answered this question.

Statement X: Returning citizens will eventually get in trouble again.

Strongly Agree-----0%

Agree-----0%

Neutral -----10%

Disagree-----70%

Strongly Agree-----20%

There was only a slight change to this question. However, respondents expressed concern that the likelihood of recidivism would rise if resources were not provided to assist returning citizens.

Statement XI: Communities of Faith should create partnerships to assist with returning citizens becoming self-sufficient.

Strongly Agree-----80%

Agree-----10%

Neutral -----0%

Disagree-----0%

Strongly Disagree-----10%

There was no change in responses to this question, as respondents were eager to initiate opportunities to create faith-based partnerships. Lay leaders and pastors said teach of them had gifts they could offer to build opportunities for returning citizens.

Statement XII: Communities of Faith do not have the resources or expertise to provide supportive services for returning citizens.

Strongly Agree-----10%

Agree-----0%

Neutral -----0%

Disagree-----20%

Strongly Disagree-----70%

There was a slight shift in opinion concerning the level of resources that faith communities could provide.

In the second group, which was reserved for pastors and persons in decision-making roles in the church, the same questions were asked. Results were as follows:

Statement I: Returning citizens deserve a second chance.

Strongly agree-----80%

Agree-----0%

Neutral-----0%

Disagree-----0%

Strongly Disagree-----20%

Statement II: I believe that the church/faith-based community should do more for returning citizens.

Adequate-----0%

Not Enough-----80%

More than enough-----0%

Sufficient-----0%

N/A-----20%

Statement III: I am supportive of providing services through my community of faith for returning citizens.

Strongly Agree-----80%

Agree-----20%

Neutral -----0%

Disagree-----0%

Strongly Disagree-----0%

Statement IV: Communities of faith should develop partnership(s) that will address the needs of returning citizens.

Strongly Agree-----80%

Agree-----20%

Neutral -----0%

Disagree-----0%

Strongly Agree-----0%

Statement V: Communities of faith should be reluctant about rapidly moving toward establishing support networks for returning citizens.

Strongly Agree-----20%

Agree-----0%

Neutral -----0%

Disagree-----60%

Strongly Disagree-----0%

N/A-----20%

Statement VI: Communities of faith have a responsibility to help provide housing, employment, and supportive networks for returning citizens.

Strongly Agree-----100%

Agree-----0%

Neutral -----0%

Disagree-----0%

Strongly Disagree-----0%

Statement VII: Returning citizens should not be mixed with regular parishioners during worship.

Strongly Agree-----0%

Agree-----0%

Disagree-----20%

Strongly Disagree-----80%

Statement VIII: When returning citizens joined our parish, they should reveal the nature/background of their crime.

Strongly Agree-----20%

Agree-----0%

Neutral-----0%

Disagree-----0%

Strongly Disagree-----80%

Statement IX: I find it difficult to respect returning citizens.

Strongly Agree-----0%

Agree-----0%

Neutral-----0%

Disagree-----40%

Strongly Disagree-----60%

Statement X: Returning citizens will eventually get in trouble again.

Strongly Agree-----20%

Agree-----0%

Neutral-----40%

Disagree-----40%

Strongly Disagree-----0%

Statement XI: Communities of Faith should create partnerships to assist with returning citizens becoming self-sufficient.

Strongly agree-----80%

Agree-----0%

Neutral -----0%

Disagree-----20%

Strongly Disagree-----0%

Statement XII: Communities of Faith do not have the resources or expertise to provide supportive services for returning citizens.

Strongly Agree-----20%

Agree-----0%

Neutral-----0%

Disagree-----40%

Strongly disagree-----40%

After hearing testimonials from ex-offenders, members of the second focus group were given the same set of questions. Results were as follows:

Statement I: Returning citizens deserve a second chance.

Strongly agree-----80%

Agree-----0%

Neutral-----0%

Disagree-----0%

Strongly Disagree-----20%

Statement II: There was no change to the attitude of the respondents from the pre-test to the post-test survey.

Statement III: I believe that that the church/faith based community should do more for returning citizens.

Adequate-----0%

Not Enough-----100%

More than enough-----0%

Sufficient-----0%

There was a slight change in the attitude of respondents. After thinking about the services they currently provide, respondents said they now sufficiently address the need for returning citizens.

Statement IV: I am supportive of providing services through my community of faith for returning citizens.

Strongly Agree-----100%
 Agree-----0%
 Neutral-----0%
 Disagree-----0%
 Strongly Disagree-----0%

There was a slight change from the pre-test assessment. However, respondents were open to working with other

Statement V: Communities of faith should develop partnership(s) that will address the needs of returning citizens.

Strongly Agree-----100%
 Agree-----0%
 Neutral-----0%
 Disagree-----0%
 Strongly Disagree-----0%

Statement VI: Communities of faith should be reluctant about rapidly moving toward establishing support networks for returning citizens.

Strongly Agree-----0%
 Agree-----0%
 Neutral-----0%
 Disagree-----20%
 Strongly Disagree-----80%

Opinions related to this question changed significantly. After response to this change, presenters shared how many communities of faith had been helpful to them in so many different ways. The presenters acknowledged that they were not able to overcome many obstacles without the support of faith teams, communities of faith etc.

Statement VI: Communities of faith have a responsibility to help provide housing, employment and supportive networks for returning citizens.

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| Strongly Agree----- | 80% |
| Agree----- | 20% |
| Neutral----- | 0% |
| Disagree----- | 0% |
| Strongly Disagree----- | 0% |

There was a slight change in the respondents' opinions due to the lack of limited resources that communities of faith may have to offer. The respondent did believe that it would be helpful to create partnerships with other faith communities and seek the support of governmental resources.

Statement VII: Returning citizens should not be mixed with regular parishioners during worship.

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| Strongly Agree----- | 0% |
| Agree----- | 0% |
| Neutral----- | 0% |
| Disagree----- | 20% |
| Strongly Disagree----- | 80% |

There was no change in the attitude of the respondents. It was revealed by the respondents, however, that congregants may feel betrayed by their leader if they knowingly knew of a parishioner's background and did not make the congregation aware.

Statement VIII: When returning citizens join our parish, they should reveal the nature/background of their crime.

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| Strongly Agree----- | 0% |
| Agree----- | 20% |
| Neutral----- | 20% |
| Disagree----- | 40% |
| Strongly Disagree----- | 20% |

The respondents had a significant change of opinion on whether returning citizens should reveal to the congregation their crime. Many felt that it should happen voluntarily as opposed to acknowledging that this crime had been committed and what the crime was upon reentering back into the community.

Statement IX: I find it difficult to respect returning citizens.

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| Strongly Agree----- | 0% |
| Agree----- | 0% |
| Neutral----- | 0% |
| Disagree----- | 20% |
| Strongly Disagree----- | 80% |

There was a slight change on this question. Respondents found it difficult to understand the nature of the crime that had been committed and to trust them to change their behavior.

Statement X: Returning citizens will eventually get in trouble again.

Strongly Agree-----0%

Agree-----0%

Neutral -----20%

Disagree-----60%

Strongly Disagree-----20%

There was not enough confidence gained from respondents after hearing the presenters that will convince them that they will not get in trouble again. The presenters spoke emotionally about the frustration that they had encountered in not finding employment, housing etc.

Statement XI: Communities of Faith should create partnerships to assist with returning citizens becoming self-sufficient.

Strongly Agree-----100%

Agree-----0%

Neutral -----0%

Disagree-----0%

Strongly Disagree-----0%

There was slight change in the attitude of this response and the respondents felt that the faith community should be involved in the support of returning citizens.

Statement XII: Communities of Faith do not have the resources or expertise to provide supportive services for returning citizens.

Strongly Agree-----20%

Agree-----20%

Neutral-----0%

Disagree-----20%

Strongly Disagree-----40%

There was a slight change in those who disagree from the pre-assessment after realizing how critical it was for communities of faith to be involved and the many ways that they could be interact with the citizens. The support of the faith community could be instrumental because of the various occupations and gifts that members of their congregation can contribute to assisting these citizens in gaining independence.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTIONS, SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This project was conceived due to the escalating number of individuals released from the criminal justice system without resources necessary to assist them in gaining their independence. The researcher was able to create an opportunity with other local faith institutions and leaders who shared the same mission and were amenable to partnerships. This project was between Antioch Builds Community, Antioch Baptist Church and other local faith institutions in the community. Our focus was to improve reentry efforts in this community and assist returning citizens with issues of self-sufficiency through creative and collaborative partnerships.

The project was created to address the serious concerns that were being neglected in the faith community. The project created substantive dialogue with the returning citizens and the faith communities. Many of the participants in the faith community were not aware of the many obstacles the returning citizens faced. This dilemma created a lively discussion among the pastors and leaders about ways they could respond to this opportunity. There was a significant change in attitude from the initial session after hearing the passionate plea to offer a second chance to people who are in aftercare recovery. Hearing from the returning citizens gave the participants an opportunity to think about how they could become more beneficial in addressing these concerns.

TOP CAT Program and Faith Team

The researcher had an opportunity to work with numerous returning citizens through the TOP CAT Program that was a technology grant program to break the digital divide. TOP CAT program was designed to work through North Carolina Central University, which employed returning citizens to support the need self-sufficiency. The researcher had an opportunity to understand the plight of the returning citizens and understand their support for gaining housing, employment, and supportive services and helping to avoid the obstacles they faced. This program offered these participants the time to engage in support networks to help overcome the challenges they faced. The researcher met regularly with participants to identify opportunities to assist. The faith teams that were established provided the same level of support in helping participants overcome barriers.

The faith teams were composed of professionals from the various congregations that participated, such as Chapel Hill Bible Church, Emmaus Way Fellowship; and the Antioch Baptist Church. The program was voluntary. However, the organization strongly recommended the participation of clients on the faith team. These teams were viewed as an opportunity to see where the greatest need was for making a difference in the lives of those involved. The returning citizens experienced a great sense of support from the teams because they were given the opportunity to walk side by side in finding the resources that they needed. The faith teams implemented a year-long process and was willing to continue to work with the clients if they desired. The clients were encouraged

to be involved in spiritual aspects of the congregation, but this was not mandatory. Most were grateful for the support and did engage in the spiritual opportunities of the church. The faith team believed it was necessary to help the congregations understand the issues that these participants faced daily. Education of the congregations was critical as we continued to embark on new opportunities.

Reflections on Spiritual Leadership and Laity

The researcher encountered a great deal of resistance from congregations at the onset of this project because of mistrust, stigmas, and other factors often associated with ex-offenders. Leaders were concerned about the opinions of its congregations and were reluctant to involve them in the planning of these organizations.

The researcher knew from past experiences that it would take sensitive leadership to engage other members of the community on this issue. Nationally, we were led to believe through the Second Chance Act that returning citizens deserve a second chance. It was also believed that the faith community could play a pivotal role in making a difference in the lives of the citizens. It was important that the misperception that many congregations had of people who had committed crimes would be realized in a forgiving manner. Re-entry is critical in our communities, and we knew that someone must be willing to address this issue. The researcher believed that if he could engage a few of the churches that it could become a model for others in the community. It was necessary to dispel the myth that these individuals could not be rehabilitated.

After engaging in this project, members of various faith communities realized that they could play a role in helping the returning citizens. The leaders believed that there

were many people in the congregation who could offer gifts that could enhance their journey. The idea of hosting educational opportunities for employment, getting much-needed resources such as bus passes, drivers license. etc., were easy ways that they could be helpful. The returning citizens were receptive to the congregations and realized that they were opening up their hearts to help them gain self-sufficiency. Volunteers in the various congregations pooled their resources to donate furniture, appliances, food, and more to make transitions easier for the participants. After participating in the focus groups, the leaders realized that many of the faces of their congregations had family members who were in identical situations. In addition, they determined that there were numerous ways they could offer services and resources to enhance the quality of life for them.

Recommendations

Overall, the researcher believed that there should be continuing education in our ministerial gatherings, church fellowships, and social networks to help spiritual leaders understand why Jesus instructed believers to care for those less fortunate. It was critical that we change our attitudes toward those who were going through periods of difficulty and began reaching out to help them.

The researcher believed that providing workshops on the plight of returning citizens may have been helpful to those participating. The researcher did see a drastic difference in the attitudes of the laity versus the attitude of the pastoral leadership. The key reason for bringing these groups together was to better understand the plight of returning citizens. The researcher clearly believed that, even though some collaboration

was established, it remains optimistic of how we continue to support these individuals through transformative lifestyles and remain on the road to recovery.

The researcher believed that it was important to building faith-based networks that bring stakeholders together for coordinating services and building community support systems. This is critical for establishing partnerships in reintegrating persons back into the community. The researcher embarked upon this project because it is essential that we expand public and congregational awareness and support the development of community and faith-based reentry initiatives. The researcher could have engaged a more diverse denomination to respond to this crisis. However, the focus was centered in the NorthEast Central Durham community. The faith community must take a proactive approach in responding to the “least of these.”

Conclusion

Benjamin E. Mays, president of Morehouse College, said: “Every man and woman is born into the world to do something unique and something distinctive, and if he or she does not do it, it will never be done.”¹ This eloquent quote from the well-noted theologian is a great exhortation for us to understand that every man or woman is entitled to do something unique and distinctive with life, and that despite the obstacles they may encounter, people are entitled to an opportunity to excel. This journey to help returning citizens has been a life-changing experience that humbled us as a community as we worked to assist the “least of these.” The faith community must be willing to provide a

¹ Orville Vernon Burton, *Born to Rebel: An Autobiography* Benjamin E. Mays (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2003), 22.

second chance for those who have failed and are in need of opportunities to succeed again.

The concept of faith communities supporting one other is crucial to the success and the mission of the church. Developing partnerships and collaborations are essential to the success of fulfilling the mission of reentry and reducing recidivism. Some of the most effective models for assisting returning citizens have come from faith entities. We cannot forget that these individuals are humans, and even though they have made some unfortunate choices, they should be reconciled with their communities and given opportunities to reestablish themselves. There could be massive improvement in the availability of services if churches continue to collaborate and seek solutions to make a difference in the lives of these individuals. Policy changes from a legislative standpoint would be extremely helpful as well, and the faith community could be a great advocate on these issues.

The researcher is confident that this approach would make a significant difference in the treatment of returning citizens. The researcher believes that no person should be punished for a lifetime. The faith community should be amenable to reconciliation and forgiveness and serve as a leader in helping to change lives. The message of the gospel indicates that we have a responsibility to serve the “least of these” and that God has equipped our congregations with excellent resources. The faith community can be instrumental in assisting returning citizens that they may experience transformed lives.

It is crucial that we put aside our differences about the crimes that have been committed and work to build relationships with our brothers and sisters. The church must be at the forefront of efforts to reestablish these relationships and help lead others to

Christ. We can change the outlook for many by extending our hearts and hands to make a difference in the lives of others. It may be difficult to forget what crimes were committed, but we can forgive and offer opportunities for reconciliation. I ask myself after experiencing this journey of understanding the life and plight of returning citizens and their families: What would Jesus do?

APPENDIX A
INVITATION TO SUMMIT PARTICIPATION



1415 Holloway Street
Durham, North Carolina 27703
(919) 688-8893

Dear Pastors and Friends,

I am inviting you to join us for a partnership summit on Saturday, June 26, 2010 at 9:00 A.M. to learn about how our faith communities can establish a relationship to address the growing need for supportive services to the "returning citizens" in our community. We are confronted daily with the lack of services for persons who continuously find it difficult to gain reentry back into the community after incarceration. We believe that if we create partnership(s) within our faith community that we can help break this cycle of recidivism. Let us join our hearts, hands and mind together to learn more about this growing problem and collaboratively seek solutions to end the plight of this epidemic. We realized that often times the consequences of mistakes are long term however I believe that we can collectively work to end issues that pertain to housing, employment, mental health, basic necessities etc.

I invite you and members of your congregations join us as we look at opportunities for engaging the faith community in this reentry summit and determine how we can respond to the needs of the "least of these." The planning committee has assembled together an extraordinary day with excellent resources, speakers and a time of discussion. A lifetime punishment is not the answer for helping those regain independence and self-sufficiency to have an opportunity for a second chance at life. We encourage pastoral leadership, lay leaders, missionaries and those who want to make a difference come together and let's find a solution. Please share our brochure for this summit with those in your congregations who have a passion to reconnect those who have lost their way but depend on you and I to improve and enhance their quality of life.

Please register and attend for I believe that your presence is critical to this movement! The cost is free and we will provide a delicious lunch however we ask that you register for preparation. Join us as we help those who are experiencing a difficult time to help themselves. Your opinion really matters!

Because of Calvary!

Michael D. Page, Chairman

Antioch Builds Community

Michael D. Page,
Chairman

Dr. Jim Thomas
Vice-Chairman

Donald Barringer,
Secretary

Attorney John W. Perry,
Treasurer

Mrs. Marlon Bailey

Mrs. Denise Baylman

Mr. Preston Edwards

Mrs. Iris Fisher

Dr. Louise Gooche

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY LEADERS

Questions for Community Leaders

- 1) Returning citizens deserve a second chance.
☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree
- 2) I believe that the church/faith based community should do more for returning citizens.
Adequate
Not Enough
More than enough
Sufficient
- 3) I am supportive of providing services through my community of faith for returning citizens.
☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neutral
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

- 4) Communities of faith should develop partnership(s) that will address the needs of returning citizens.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Neutral
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree
- 5) Communities of faith should be reluctant about rapidly moving toward establishing support networks for returning citizens.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Neutral
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree
- 6) Communities of faith have a responsibility to help provide housing, employment and supportive networks for returning citizens.
- ☐ Strongly Agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Neutral
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree

7) Returning citizens should not be mixed with regular parishioners during worship.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

8) When returning citizens joined our parish, they should reveal the nature/background of their crime.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

9) I find it difficult to respect returning citizens.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

10) Returning citizens will eventually get in trouble again.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

11) Communities of Faith should create partnerships to assist with returning citizens becoming self-sufficient.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

12) Communities of Faith do not have the resources or expertise to provide supportive services for returning citizens.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX C
FOCUS GROUP AND SUMMIT AGENDA

Re-Entry Summit Registration Form

* Free Registration

To attend you must complete and mail the registration form or you can register by calling (919) 688-8893

* Please return this form by Wednesday, June 23rd to:

Re-Entry Summit
Antioch Builds Community
1415 Holloway Street
Durham, NC 27703

Names of Registrants:

Church Affiliation:

Address:

Telephone:

Re-Entry Summit is Sponsored By:

* Antioch Builds Community

* Antioch Fellowship Hall

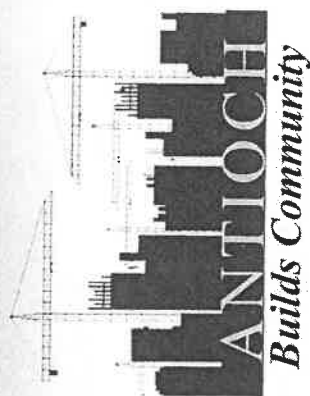
* Durham Police Department

* Durham System of Care

* Criminal Justice Resource Center

* Durham System of Care

* Durham System of Care



RE-ENTRY:
RESPONDING TO THE
CALL THROUGH FAITH-
BASED PARTNERSHIPS

Saturday,
June 26, 2010
9:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

Dr. Harold J. Cobb Fellowship Hall
Antioch Baptist Church
1415 Holloway Street
Durham, North Carolina
Michael D. Page, Pastor

Message from Pastor Michael D. Page

I am inviting you to join us to learn about how our faith communities can establish a relationship to address the growing need for supportive services to the "returning citizens" in our community. A lifetime punishment is not the answer for helping those regain independence and self-sufficiency to have an opportunity for a second chance at life.

The planning committee has assembled together an extraordinary day with excellent resources, speakers and a time of discussion. We encourage pastoral leadership, lay leaders, missionaries and those who want to make a difference to come together and find a solution. Please share our brochure for this summit with those in your congregations who have a passion to reconnect those who have lost their way but depend on you and I to improve and enhance their quality of life.

Let us join our hearts, hands and mind together to learn more about this growing problem and collaboratively seek solutions to end the plight of this epidemic.

Who Should Attend:

- * Pastors * Lay Leaders
- * Missionaries * Prison Ministry Teams
- * Community Minded Members

Re-Entry Summit Agenda:

Continental Breakfast

Keynote Presentations

Informative Workshops

* No Place to Live

*

* Who Can I Turn To?

*

Panel of "Returning Citizens"

Establishing Faith-Based Partnerships

Luncheon

"In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of my brethren, ye have done it unto me..."
Matthew 25:40

Re-Entry Presenters Include:

* Mr. O'Mar Taylor
Just a Clean House

* Mr. Robert Battle
StepUp Ministries

* Dr. Terry Saulsberry
Chaplain, Federal Bureau of Prisons

* Captain Phil Wiggins
Summit Church

* Ms. Ann Oshel
The Durham Center

* Rev. Ginger Brasher-Cunningham
Pilgrim United Church of Christ

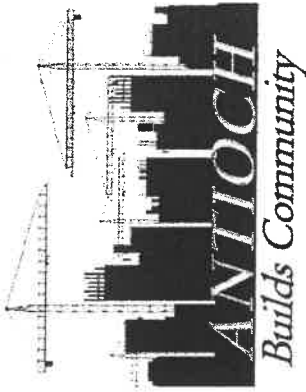
* Mr. Joel Wright
Criminal Justice Resource Center

* Faith Team Representative
Antioch Baptist Church

* Jennifer Epperson
North Carolina Attorney General Office

APPENDIX D

ANTIOCH BUILDS COMMUNITY BROCHURE



Antioch Builds Community Board of Directors

Would you like to make a donation?
Here's how:

Donations should be made payable
to Antioch Builds Community
and mailed to:

Antioch Builds Community
1415 Holloway Street
Durham, NC 27703

To make a donation by phone,
please call
☎ (919) 688-8893

Rev. Michael D. Page, Chairman
Dr. Jim Thomas, Vice Chair
Attorney John W. Perry, Treasurer
Ms. Marion R. Bailey
Ms. Denise Baynham
Ms. Marcia Bradshaw
Ms. Iris J. Fisher
Mr. John Hogan

Working to
Restore Lives to
Self Sufficiency

"I want to be out there on the firing line,
helping, directing or doing something
to try to make this a better world,
a better place to live."
Dr. John Hope Franklin

1415 Holloway Street
Durham, NC
(919) 688-8893

Mission:

Our mission is to support individual lives and work cooperatively to improve the quality of life of our community.

Antioch Builds Community is a collaborative partnership program with:

Antioch Baptist Church

Chapel Hill Bible Church

Emmaus Way

HHS-CEN Program

(NCCU Grant Seven C's Coalition)

Areas of Focus:

✓ Priority

To serve Formerly Incarcerated Persons (FIP), children of incarcerated persons and provide supportive community services

✓ Faith Team

Proccessional Network of Community Associates who facilitates case management services with Formerly Incarcerated Persons upon reentering the community

✓ Housing

Supportive housing services for Formerly Incarcerated Persons (Our goal is to establish an ABC Housing Facility)

✓ Employment

Work cooperatively with Job Link Center to host a job link site, employment workshops and training

Accomplishments:

✓ Provided a Summer Camp for disadvantaged youth

✓ Successful faith teams that support Formerly Incarcerated Persons transitioning back into the community

✓ Provided hot meals to the homeless on Christmas Day

✓ Supported children of incarcerated parents

✓ Hosted Computer Center

APPENDIX E
RECIDIVISM FACTS

Appendix E

What's Your Recidivism Rate?

This is the question of utmost interest to county commissioners and community members, policymakers, and the press. This statistic is often narrowly sought as the main indicator of a correctional system's success; however, at present there is no national estimate of recidivism rates—no matter how it is defined—for those released from local jails. Jail administrators are often unprepared to answer this question because jails rarely track recidivism or evaluate their programs.

What do we mean by “recidivism”?

Recidivism is defined in a variety of ways by researchers and correctional systems as a measure of return to criminal activity. It is often used interchangeably to refer to rearrest, reconviction, and reincarceration. Some recidivism studies count all rearrests as recidivism, others count only reconviction or only a return to incarceration, and some studies track all three events. More sophisticated analyses might also explore the timing and offense type of the recidivist events to explore individuals' long-term success following incarceration and whether they are recidivating for a lesser offense.

The recidivism statistic has little meaning unless it is accompanied by a precise definition of what constitutes a recidivist event and the period over which it is measured. Some argue for a national definition of recidivism to enable consistent measurement across jurisdictions.

Why should a jurisdiction consider tracking recidivism?

While one could argue over whether it makes sense to identify a national measure of recidivism, there is no question as to the benefit of developing a number of benchmarks that can help jurisdictions articulate their goals and measure their progress against these goals. The value of recidivism analysis is not only as an institutional measure of performance, but also as a diagnostic tool to better understand population trends and the flow of individuals through the local justice system. Such analysis helps determine whether resources are being spent appropriately and where changes are needed

Why don't most jails track recidivism?

From a capacity standpoint, most jails are not equipped with the staff and resources to undertake such exploration into the recidivism patterns of the transitory and complex jail population, most of whom are pretrial detainees. But more important, few jail administrators see the purpose of tracking this kind of information on a population whose outcomes they believe they have little control over. Jail administrators are primarily burdened with running safe, secure, and humane institutions.

Measuring jail recidivism is particularly challenging because of the nature of the inmate population and how it flows through the justice system. Jail inmates are not always released directly to the streets but instead may be transferred to the custody of other authorities (state, federal, military, or juvenile). The few jail systems involved in recidivism analysis generally limit the population of interest to those individuals who will be released directly to the community.

What else is important to measure?

There are many measures beyond recidivism that are important to gauge the success of a jurisdiction's reentry efforts. Some examples include whether individuals have a job, are sober, remain in treatment, have received and are taking their medications and continue to attend to their health needs, are not homeless, and are involved with their children and family networks.

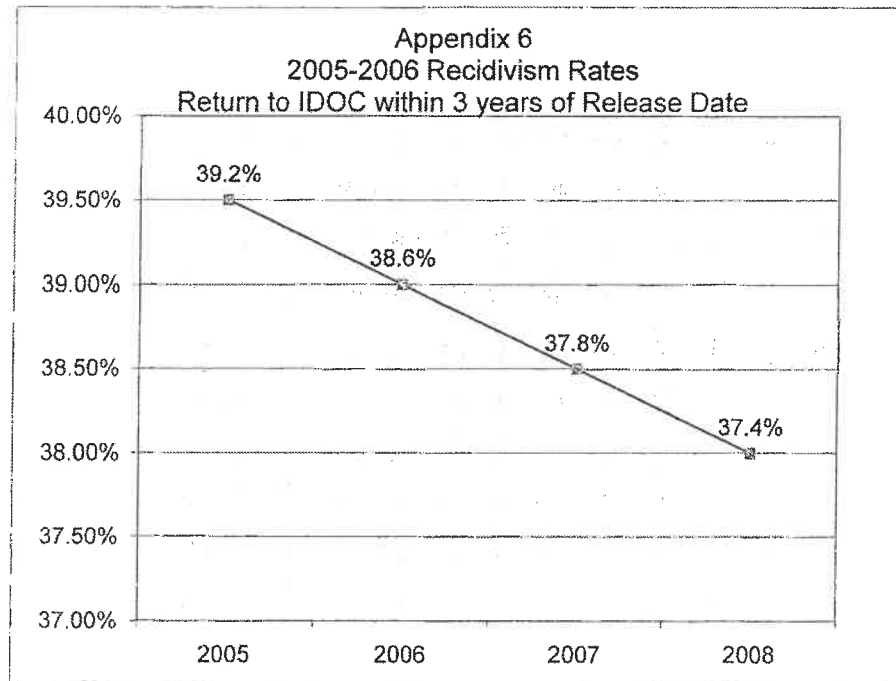
Where can I go to learn more?

There are several systems around the country that are beginning to illustrate both the importance and the feasibility of collecting outcome measures that can be used to identify ways to improve institutional management, operation, and release planning. For example, Hampden County (Massachusetts) has been tracking and studying recidivism since 1998, and it is now part of the sheriff's department's routine operation. Hampden County chooses to focus its data collection resources on sentenced inmates who are returning to the street because these individuals occupy more bed space and are required to be involved in programming and release planning. Hampden County is examining methodologies to track its pretrial population as well, and is involved in a study of former inmates who succeed in the community.

For more information about the importance of measuring recidivism and the experience in Hampden County, see Martha Lyman and Stefan LoBuglio, “‘Whys’ and ‘Hows’ of Measuring Jail Recidivism,” available at www.urban.org/projects/reentry-roundtable/roundtable9.cfm.

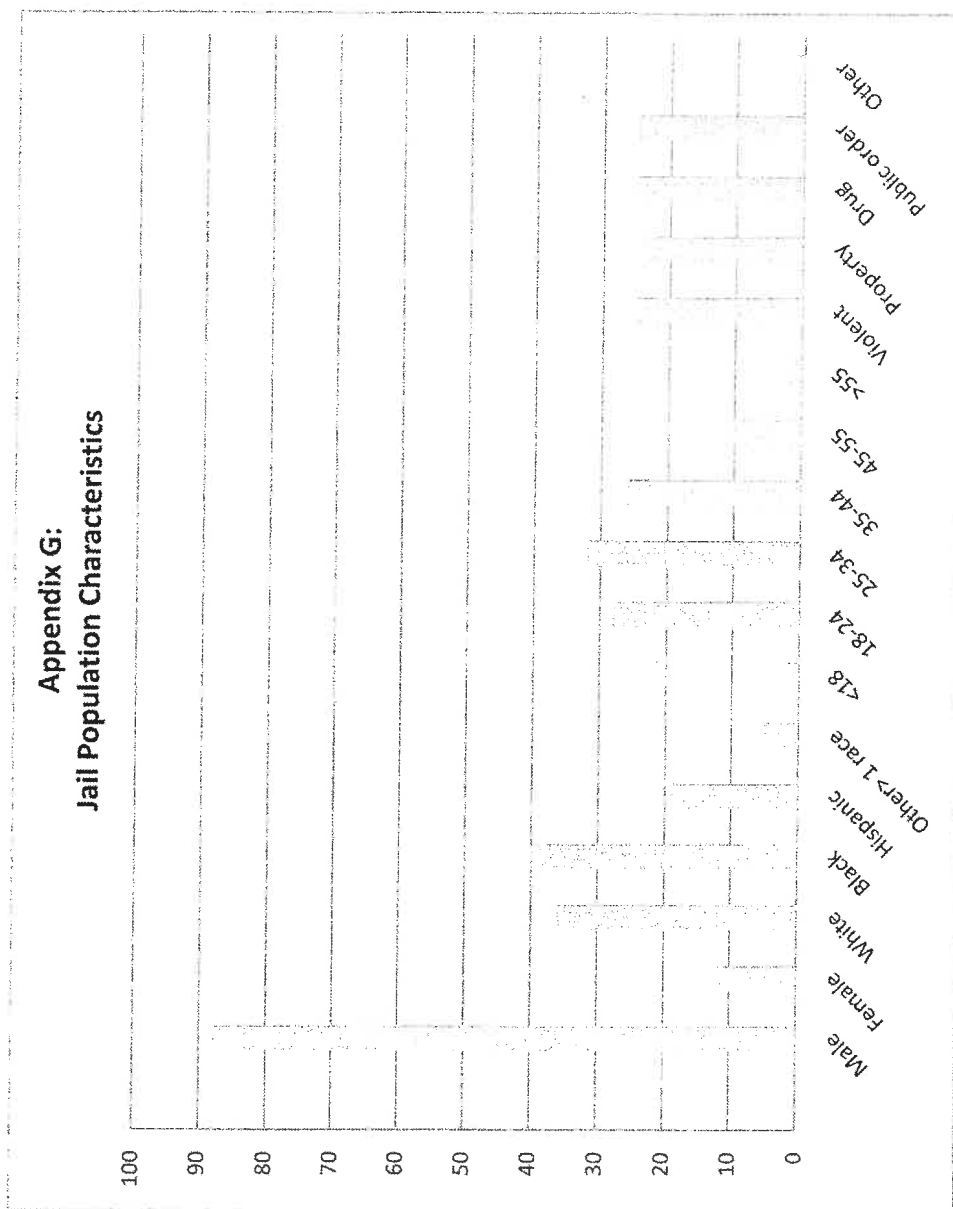
APPENDIX F
RECIDIVISM RATES

| | |
|------|--------|
| 2005 | 39.50% |
| 2006 | 39.00% |
| 2007 | 38.50% |



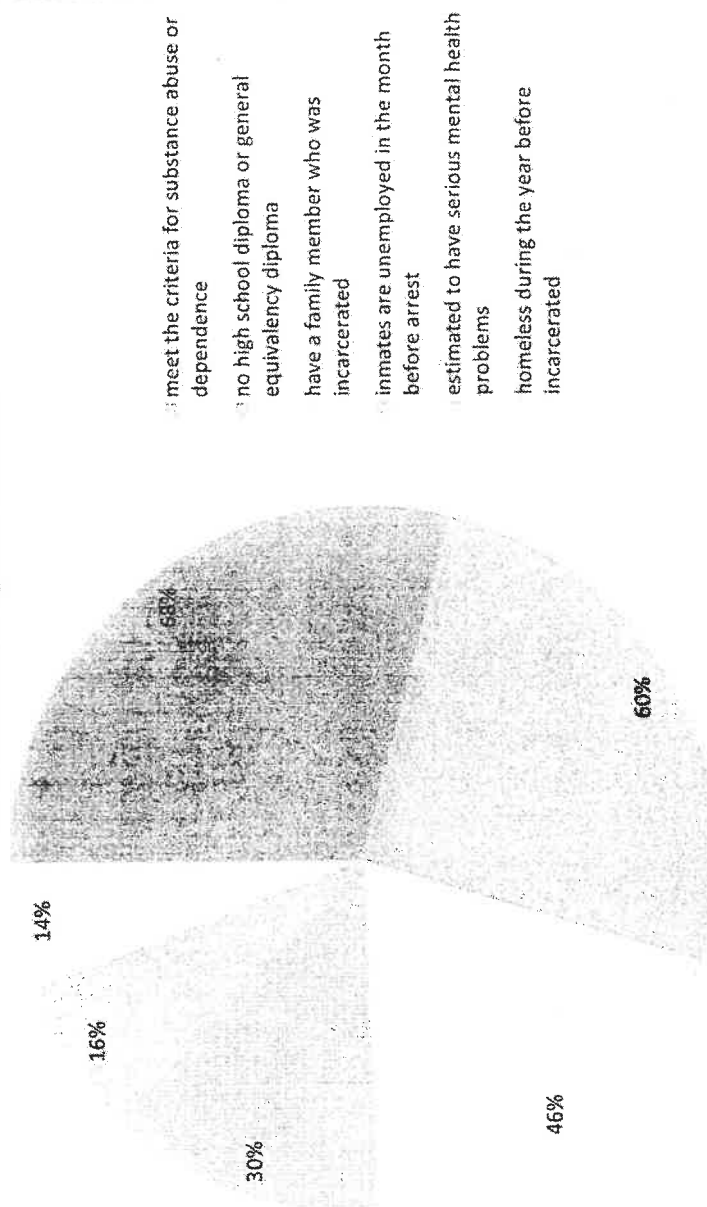
APPENDIX G
JAIL POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

**Appendix G:
Jail Population Characteristics**



APPENDIX H
INDIVIDUAL CHALLENGES FOR INMATES

Appendix H Individual Challenges for Inmates



APPENDIX I

JAIL REENTRY INITIATIVE MATRIX

Jail Reentry Initiative Program Matrix

| Program Name | Central Agency(s) | Jail | Community Corrections | Private Community-Based | Government Service Agency | Programmatic Focus* | | | | | | | | | | Population Served | | | | | Jail Size (Average Daily Population) | | | | | Jail Location | Page | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| | | | | | | Comprehensive | Substance Abuse | Mental Health | Physical Health | Employment | Housing | Legal Status | | Gender | Number Served Per Year | Jail Size (Average Daily Population) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Sentenced | Pretrial | | | F | M | 0-100 | 101-250 | 251-500 | 501-1,000 | 1,001-2,000 | >2,000 | >150 | 150-500 | | | 501-1,000 | 1,001-2,000 | >10,000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Allegheny County Jail Collaborative Allegheny County, PA BELIEF Program Richmond, VA | Allegheny County Bureau of Corrections; Allegheny County Department of Human Services | X | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |

| Jail Reentry Initiative Program Matrix (continued) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|-------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|------------|---------|--------------|-------------------|------------------------|---|--|--|--------------------------------------|---------------|------|--|--|--|-----|
| Program Name | Central Agency(s) | Agency Type | | | Programmatic Focus* | | | | | | | Population Served | | | | | Jail Size (Average Daily Population) | Jail Location | Page | | | | |
| | | Jail | Community Corrections | Private/Community-Based | Comprehensive | Substance Abuse | Mental Health | Physical Health | Employment | Housing | Legal Status | Gender | Number Served Per Year | | | | | | | | | | |
| Florida Offender Public Safety Initiative Norfolk County, MA | Norfolk County Sheriff's Office | X | | | X | | | | | | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | 141 |
| Residential Substance Abuse Treatment Get Real Program Douglas County, OR | Douglas County Sheriff's Office; Douglas County Community Corrections; Douglas County Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment | X | X | X | | X | | | | | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | 142 |
| Responsible Transition Program Miami-Dade County, FL | Miami-Dade County Corrections and Rehabilitation Department | X | | | X | | | | | | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | 147 |
| Rikers Island Discharge Planning Enhancement Program New York, NY | New York City Department of Correction; New York City Department of Homeless Services | X | | | X | | | | | | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | 149 |
| Second Chances Norfolk, VA | STOP Organization | | X | | X | | | | X | | | X | X | | | | | | | | | | 151 |
| Transition Services Unit Multnomah County, OR | Multnomah County Department of Community Justice | | X | | X | | | | | | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | 153 |
| Transitional Alpha Program Maricopa County, AZ | Maricopa County Sheriff's Office | X | | | | X | | | | | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | 155 |
| Transitional Case Management Los Angeles County, CA | Tarzana Treatment Centers | | | X | | | | X | | | | X | X | | | | | | | | | | 157 |
| Transitional Services Westchester County, NY | Westchester County Department of Corrections | X | | | X | | | | | | | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | 159 |

*If an initiative is marked as comprehensive, it does not mean that it necessarily includes a focus on all other programmatic areas. Rather, the initiative offers a variety of services to a range of individuals. If a particular programmatic focus is marked, it signifies that the initiative offers a variety of services but also includes a focus on a particular area of service.

| Program Name | Central Agency(s) | Jail | Programmatic Focus* | | | | | | | | | | Population Served | | | | | | Jail Location | Page | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| | | | Agency Type | | Programmatic Focus* | | | | | | | | Legal Status | | Gender | | Number Served Per Year | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | Community Corrections | Private Community-Based | Government Service Agency | Comprehensive | Substance Abuse | Mental Health | Physical Health | Employment | Housing | Sentenced | Pretrial | F | M | 0-100 | 101-250 | 251-500 | 501-1,000 | 1,001-2,000 | >2,000 | <150 | 150-500 | 501-1,000 | 1,001-2,000 | 2,001-10,000 | >10,000 | Urban | Suburban | Rural | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Inmate Rehabilitating Through Occupational and Academic Development Systems | San Bernardino County, CA | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Examples from the Field

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